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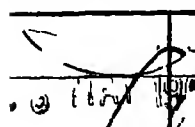
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SELF, THOUGHT AND REALITY

SELF, THOUGHT AND REALITY

BY

A. C. MUKERJI, M.A.,

*Reader in Philosophy,
Allahabad University*



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To

P. B. ADHIKARI, M.A.,

PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY BENARES HINDU UNIVERSITY,

THIS WORK IS GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED.

PREFACE

THE object and the scope of the following lines are explained in the introductory chapter. All that need be added here is that the present essay is a study in the ultimate principles of knowledge and existence, and is, therefore, predominantly epistemological in character. The maxim I have kept before my mind throughout the study is that no great thinker can be seriously wrong in his deepest convictions. This has helped me to suggest solutions of a number of difficult problems that are still in the forefront of philosophical thought. By reading a philosopher with the eyes of his critics, I have evolved a new standpoint from which it may be possible to reconcile many an agelong controversy, such as idealism *versus* realism, the coherence theory *versus* the correspondence theory, being *versus* becoming, etc. My main purpose, however, has been to remove some of the obstacles which still stand in the way of a general recognition of those ultimate principles of knowledge that must nevertheless be the common platform for the competing

theories to stand upon. This is absolutely necessary in the present state of philosophy, for, not a few of the acute disputes in contemporary thought, I believe, are due to the lack of a clear consciousness of the first principles.

There are many interesting problems of contemporary thought that are not discussed here, not because they are not important, but because they are more or less of the nature of deductions following from the ultimate principles. In discussing these first principles, again, I have restricted myself to the views of those thinkers alone who represent some definite tendencies in contemporary philosophy.

My discussions have been naturally carried up to the problem of self which is undoubtedly the most ultimate of the transcendental conditions of knowledge. And as this problem has occupied a most prominent place in the philosophical discussions of India, an attempt has been made in the last two chapters to bring out the dialectic of universal thought by a brief analysis of the arguments of Sankara who was admittedly one of the most distinguished thinkers of India. My analysis has been inevitably short, but even this brief consideration of Sankara's position may show clearly that thought has an immanent dialectic which knows

no limits of space and time. In the end I have added a few comments on the vedāntic methodology in order to emphasise an aspect of Indian thought which is but too frequently ignored by the modern interpreters of the vedānta speculations. I have also given in this connection a short account of an important tendency in contemporary Indian thought.

Some parts of the present work have been occasionally published in the annual issues of the Allahabad University Studies, Reviews of Philosophy and Religion, and other journals. I have, however, altered at several places the modes of expressions and introduced new materials to meet the criticisms received from kind friends. I thank the editors for the permission to utilize the matter published in their respective journals.

The idea of publishing this study was suggested to me by the appreciative comments received some years ago from the late A. S. Pringle-Pattison on a most vital part of my contentions; it pains me to think that I could not complete my study while he was alive. I am particularly indebted to Professor Harold H. Joachim of the New College, Oxford, for the uniform courtesy with which he has always responded to my calls for remarks and suggestions. With his characteristic generosity, Prof.

Joachim has frequently helped the development of my thought by sending valuable comments and encouraging notes. I am also grateful to numerous friends in as well as outside India who have encouraged me with their appreciative remarks. But for their encouragement the present work would have never seen the light of the day. I am also obliged to my student, Mr. M. M. Taqi, B.A., for the trouble he has taken to prepare the index

Feb. 21, 1933.

A. C. MUKERJI.

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SELF, THOUGHT AND REALITY

CHAPTER I

General Introduction

Since the dawn of reflective enquiry into the nature and meaning of existence the Self has been one of the most fascinating subjects of human interest. And though it has rightly occupied a most prominent place in the vast array of problems that are generally recognised as the philosophical problems *par excellence*, yet, like every other problem, it has come to manifest in the history of thought an enormous vitality and stands to this day as one of the most slippery problems of philosophy. In ancient India, as is well known, the realization of the highest purpose of existence was made conditional on the right knowledge of self, and the perplexities which were born of the controversy on self led to the formulation of a bewildering variety of theories which cannot fail to remind one of some of the doctrines that are still in the forefront of philosophical thought. Similarly, in the history of western philosophy knowledge of self has sometimes been considered to be the *raison d'être* of all speculative

explorations of the universe since the time of Protagoras and Socrates.) And in spite of the concentrated and continuous efforts of a long series of eminent thinkers, it is still a disputed question whether the supreme problem inscribed on the temple of Delphi has been really solved or not.

The object of the present essay is to lay the epistemological foundation of a theory of self by removing some of the obstacles which have persistently clung to the problem and obscured the real issues. Consequently, it is mainly concerned with the first principles of knowledge. Such a method of approaching the theory of self through a consideration of the morphology of knowledge has a two-fold advantage. First, every theory, irrespective of the subjects of enquiry, should have an epistemological foundation for the simple reason that a philosophical conclusion is not a dogmatic assertion, and so a theory, howsoever high its certificate of authority may be, has little philosophical value till it can produce its logical credentials. (If there is anything that is inimical to the real philosophical spirit and insight, it is the dogmatic attitude, the tendency to accept a position without enquiring into its logical foundation.) Dogmatism may have its utility in practical life, as the ordinary affairs of our daily existence cannot

wait for metaphysical analysis and logical scrutiny. Here it is no doubt true that he who hesitates is lost. But philosophy as the thinking consideration of things cannot dispense with the method of serious and systematic thought, whatever may be the thing thought about. Hence it is found in the history of philosophy that all the serious disputes on the nature and status of self have reflected the different attitudes which the philosophers have assumed to the problem of knowledge, and that every theory of self is influenced by a corresponding theory of knowledge.

Secondly, a theory of self has a more intimate relation to the problem of knowledge than any other theory. One may investigate the nature of matter and energy, space and time, or the sun and the stars, without raising the difficult problems of epistemology. Nay, it is possible, in a considerable measure, to theorise on the problems of psychology and sociology, ethics and religion, without a clear consciousness of the principles of thought and knowledge. But a theory of self can ill afford to neglect the consideration of the ultimate presuppositions that are at the basis of every theory and every effort to theorise ; because it is only when the nature and constitution of knowledge is rightly apprehended that one can expect to understand

the nature and status of the self which is the knower, invariably present in the knowledge situation. And, in fact, the historical movement of self-theories has been seriously affected by the changes in the conception of knowledge. A philosopher, for instance, for whom knowledge is a peculiar response of the nervous system to its environment would find it difficult to distinguish the self from the body, and consequently any theory which posits a spiritual self behind the body would make no appeal whatsoever to his mind. On the other hand, those who look upon knowledge as being essentially a logical construction would naturally find it absurd to identify the knowing self with the nervous system, brain or any other part of the body. Similarly, again, a philosopher who considers knowledge after the analogy of a mechanical relation between two entities will favour the conception of self as an atomic existence, while another who would reduce knowledge to practical expediency or a means to the ends of life must necessarily repudiate any theory of self which regards the distinction between the subject and the object of knowledge as being more than a practical distinction of the functional order.)

From these considerations, we believe, it is amply evident that a true conception of self

is intimately connected with a correspondingly true notion of the morphology of knowledge. While there is an error in your analysis of knowledge, it is idle to ~~except~~^{say} that your conception of self would not be affected by that error. Conversely, a serious discussion of the problem of knowledge cannot be continued to any profitable length without throwing a flood of light on the nature of self that knows. Hence, our discussions on the nature of knowledge will naturally illumine many of the dark corners of the controversy on self, and thus prepare the ground for a doctrine which will at least have the advantage of being constructed on a solid basis, over against those that are not preceded by a careful analysis of knowledge.

Fortunately, a good deal of sound work in epistemology has been already done since the time of Hume and Kant. And though it is true that post-Kantian speculations have not found it possible to accept the result of the Kantian analysis of knowledge as the last word of epistemology, yet, we believe, there is a substantial amount of truth in the observation of Green that it is only at rare epochs that "there appear men, or sets of men, with the true speculative impulse to begin at the beginning and go to the end, and with the faculty of

discerning the true point of departure which previous speculation has fixed for them. The intervals are occupied by commentators and exponents of the last true philosopher, if it has been his mission to construct; if it has been sceptical, by writers who cannot understand the fatal question that he has asked, and thus still dig in the old vein which he had exhausted, and of which his final dilemma had shown the bottom."¹ Naturally, therefore, no theory of knowledge, notwithstanding what advances it proposes to make, can afford to ignore the work of such philosophers as Hume and Kant who were the first to raise the problem of knowledge to its present status, by their determination to begin at the beginning, as well as by the thoroughness with which they carried their principles to the end. Hence, all that we are about to do in the following pages is to attempt to restate, in the light of contemporary philosophical tendencies, some of the principles of permanent speculative value that have been deposited underneath the ceaselessly changing currents and cross-currents of critical thought during what is known as the modern period of philosophy. In restating these principles, we may appear to many as advocating some of the well known philosophical tenets of dubious

¹ *Works I, p. 2.*

value, and our attempt may seem to be not unlike a belated defence of an outworn philosophical creed. Hence it is necessary to remark in the beginning that truth is never outgrown, nor is it discovered every day. Yet, in view of the ever-changing intellectual environment and the shifting interest of man, it is often necessary to restate in the language of a particular age those very principles which, though appreciated in the past, lose their utility and cogency or degenerate into lifeless catch-words owing to their formulation in the language of an earlier age. The race that the world is running in hot haste for the capture of an unknown prize, does not allow one to stop, far less to look back. Unfortunately, however, philosophy is a subject which demands patience to stop as well as courage to look back, and here quick return means less profit in the long run.

It may easily be conjectured from what we have already said that though the present work is something like a survey of the currents of modern thought, it does not claim to be an exhaustive history of the bewilderingly diverse channels into which the currents have flowed. And the reason is partly that that would make the task overwhelmingly heavy even if we had confined ourselves to the strictly epistemological aspects alone. But the main reason for

restricting the scope of our survey is that an exhaustive history is not called for in a work which aims primarily at laying the foundation for a theory of self. It is only those questions of knowledge that have a direct bearing on the problem of self which should be discussed in a work like this. In fact what is wanted for our ultimate purpose is not so much a complete criticism of the epistemological tendencies that have ever made their appearance in the history of thought, as an apology that man's philosophical adventures in the sphere of epistemology at least have not been all a wild goose chase, though, unfortunately, this is the verdict of people in general concerning the total output of the philosophical toil. Philosophers in particular have a peculiar knack to misunderstand each other in respect of even the gravest problems of thought, and they are so far rightly considered as wasting their life and energy over ineffectual bickerings and useless hair-splitting. We are, however, strongly of the opinion that these differences are due to the extralogical prejudices which they have smuggled into their philosophy; and once the principles of strict proof are eclipsed by the intoxicating solicitation of a social, ethical or religious dogma, imagination rides roughshod over reason, and then philosophy degenerates

into a veritable pandemonium of uncontrolled fancies.

An explanation of the way in which we have characterised our attempt in the following pages may be useful at this place. Though our main purpose is epistemological, we have not hesitated to call it an idealistic interpretation of reality; for, first, it is, we venture to think, impossible to accentuate the problems of knowledge without touching upon the age-long controversy between idealism and realism; and, secondly, the present study is so much inspired by the thoughts of the eminent idealists that we have not only considered it less misleading to name it after their philosophical creed, but have tried to substantiate our conclusions by frequent reference to their arguments. Yet, however, it is an impartial study of some of the basic principles of philosophy, and the careful reader will not fail to detect in crucial places the rift that lies between our position and what is generally known as idealism; and if our contentions have been apparently directed against realism in its various forms, they have been sometimes used to show the excesses of the idealistic position as well. In fact, there will be ample evidence to show that we have read the idealist with the eyes of the realist and the realist with the eyes of the idealist.

And in so doing an attempt has been made to develop a theory of the universe which is neither purely idealistic nor entirely realistic. Thus, we have been compelled to differ from many prominent thinkers of both the schools, for which we may apologise by remarking, in the words of Green, that we best do reverence to their genius, we most truly appropriate their spirit, in so exploring the difficulties to which their enquiry led, as to find in them the suggestion of a theory which may help us to walk firmly where they stumbled and fell.

The only other remark which we would like to make in this introductory chapter is in connection with our claims to finality and originality. So far as the first point is concerned, it is perhaps true that finality in a philosophical enquiry is bound to remain a mere ideal; yet that is no reason why fresh attempts should not be made to narrow down the sources of error. This is our only apology for the present work. As for originality, the present writer has always felt the essential correctness of the pregnant remarks of an American philosopher that "It is the fate of the philosophical student to be cut off, by his very task, from all but a very relative and imperfect sort of originality. He is simply making articulate the life which he is privileged to enjoy. He invents nothing; he

only confesses. . . . Others create, he observes. Consequently, were a philosophy original, it would be *ipso facto* untrue." Then it is further remarked that though we find some lonesome students of philosophy claiming originality even now, yet "such men, when they appear nowadays as once in a while they do appear, are anachronisms; and you will always find them either ignorant of the history of the very subject that they propose to revolutionize or incapable of reading this history intelligently."¹ Similarly, F. H. Bradley admits that with regard to originality in a philosophical work he entertains 'a feeling of contempt.'² The 'imperfect sort of originality' however that we claim for the following survey of contemporary philosophical tendencies consists in bringing them within the fighting range of each other, by reformulating some of the basic principles of knowledge in terms of the present age, and developing them in a partially new direction. It may be easily seen that such a restatement is of some value for any real progress of philosophical thought; for, knowledge is bound to stagnate and move in a circular groove if every age has to make a fresh start. No progress,

¹ J. Royce, *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, p. 343.

² *Principles of Logic*, p. 515.

either in science or in philosophy, is possible till the achievements of one age can be made the basis of the further construction of the next; and if philosophy in spite of its now fairly long career, has not given us even the bare foundation for constructing the house of knowledge, that circumstance by itself is sufficient to make one sceptical of the potentiality of the philosophical speculation in general. But we believe, and this we shall try to justify in the following pages, that the philosophical expedition of man has not been entirely abortive; a number of first principles of permanent significance has been unearthed by the tireless activities of the modern thinkers—principles which must lie at the foundation of every true philosophy, however unconscious it may appear to be of their existence or value.

CHAPTER II

The Realism of David Hume

Our age, inspite of its love of catholicism and humanitarianism is in many respects essentially individualistic, and our conceptions of human progress and our ideals of human freedom are vitiated by the same imperfections which characterised the thoughts of the eighteenth century. It is our indifference to the great lessons which the nineteenth century imparted to humanity at large, that is responsible in a large measure for the cataclysm to which we are driving ourselves—a cataclysm which overtakes humanity as often as man's attitude stops at the "everlasting no." The only difference between the disaster which is awaiting us in the near future and that of an earlier age appears to be this that while the latter affected Europe alone, the effects of the present "Aufklärung" are likely to be co-extensive with the world. The onlightenment has been aptly described as a "crisis and a revolution in the history of the world and of civilization, a movement that penetrates into all departments of life, that

✓
Individualism in every sphere leads to disintegration

began in the eighteenth century and still continues, so far as the mass of the people in our day is in the condition which at that time was characteristic of the few."¹ As a matter of fact in the name of a democratic ideal and human emancipation what we are actually striving for is the unmolested supremacy of the individual over everything else; and it is perhaps high time for us to realize that an extreme emphasis upon the abstract individual can lead to anarchy but no democracy, and the self-refutation in this case is not less inevitable than in abstract universalism. If it is important to remember that the whole is for the parts, it is perhaps more important to insist that the parts have no significance apart from the whole and that everywhere order and harmony presuppose an amount of subordination and plasticity on the part of the individuals. There can be no law of the moment because an abstract moment is the very negation of that permanence and stability which a law implies. If the momentary fragments of my conscious life be not held together by the unity of a law which is more than these fragments, and similarly if the caprices of the exclusive individual, be not subordinated to a whole which is over-individual, there can be neither self nor society. In one case, it is a

¹ Erdmann, *History of Philosophy*, II., p. 283.

"mere manifold" without the unity of self-consciousness, as in the other it is an absolute anarchy without a community of purpose. Hence whenever the abstract individual of the moment is emphasized at the expense of the whole, it inevitably leads to disintegration in every department of life. In politics, it leads to the theory of "natural right" which essentially undermines the foundation of political obligation; in ethics, it leads to individualistic hedonism which ultimately dissolves morality into selfish pursuit of pleasure; in religion it leads to pietism which spurns at all creeds and insists on a non-ecclesiastical or private form of religion; and finally, in philosophy, it leads to scepticism and distrust of reason, thus overthrowing the ultimate principles of knowledge and experience. In fact, when Locke says that man is born with a title to perfect freedom, and an uncontrolled enjoyment of all the rights and privileges of the law of nature¹ it is the application, to the political sphere, of the same principle which underlies his views on the "simple ideas," the principles namely, that the particulars have a nature of their own apart from the whole to which they may, but need not, belong. This is just what consistency requires. It is as impossible for Locke to give priority to the whole in

¹ *Civil Government, Ch. VII, Sec. 87.*

politics while insisting on the supremacy of the parts in the theory of knowledge, as it would be impossible for Hooker and Grotius, Hobbes and Rousseau, to vindicate the superior claims of the individual in their politics and at the same time emphasize the importance of the categories in their epistemology, if they had taken up the problem of knowledge at all.

This individualism, which is characteristic of the empirico-realistic attitude of mind, is everywhere due to an imperfect view of the individual. It emphasizes an element of reality in its abstractness from the whole, and does not see, to borrow a phrase of Bosanquet, the self-transcendence of the individual. Each atom is supposed to be a hard nucleus impervious to others, and their relation to one another are then thought to be purely extrinsic; so that their belonging to one world is after all a mere accident and is not essential to their intrinsic nature. This is the real significance of individualism which is equivalent to abstractionism. The realistic mind, says Mr. J. W. Scott,¹ stands idly before the given...abandoning all attempts to construct it trying simply to *take* it, muttering to himself in succession, "just this," "this

¹ *Realism and Politic*, an article in the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1917-18.

here," "here *now*," this *out* here now." This realistic temper, as he attempts to show through the doctrines of Bergson and Russell leads to the narrowness of current industrial movements of Europe. It favours the multiplication of small organisations "so that the individual who cannot get scope for himself in the service of a great wide state may be able to select a sphere which suits him and get scope there for that in him which the wider world has no use for." Mr. Scott has rightly traced the origin of individualism to the realistic attitude of mind, for the realistic abstraction of the external world from the knowing mind is but a particular application of a more general principle—a principle which underlies the common-sense interpretations of experience as well as the realistic and the empirical methods in philosophy.

The object of the present chapter is to lay bare what appears to be the fundamental fallacy in some of the current streams of philosophical speculations. The semblance of advance which they are generally supposed to have made is due to our not realising the exact nature of Kant's answer to Hume, the consequence being a repetition of the "Humian fallacy." In fact, the substantial correctness of Hume's position and its unassailability have been recognised not

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only by the realists and the pragmatists of our time, who avowedly build their speculations upon the basis laid by the Scottish sceptic, but this recognition has very often come from quarters where sensationalism and empiricism are supposed to be exploded doctrines. The necessary implication of this of course is, in the words of J. H. Stirling, that Kant's vast transcendental machinery is a signal failure.¹ But are we prepared to accept this judgment? Kant's works, it is well known, were the results of reflections upon various problems of his time. His special intention was to enquire if the positivistic and mechanical view of the world were not ultimately reconcilable with the demands of moral and religious consciousness; and this spirit of mediation is prominently present throughout the arguments of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. But even if it be conceded that Kant over-played the mediator this should not blind us to his permanent contributions to philosophy, specially to epistemology; yet, we fear, this is just what has happened. The debatable aspects of his teaching have exercised and are still exercising such a harmful influence upon many of his readers that they are slow to recognise the value and significance of even the central epistemological

¹ Mind, 1885.

contentions of the *Critique*. It may be useful therefore to bring the permanent elements of Kant's philosophy into a focus which will at least have the use of determining the lines upon which alone the Kantian position admits of further elaborations. Nay, such a focalisation is absolutely indispensable for any real advance of speculative thought, particularly at present when the old exploded theories are again struggling for life and even supremacy, fortified by mathematical researches and abstruse dialectics. This circumstance sufficiently bears out Green's remark that each generation requires the question of philosophy to be put to it in its own language, and unless they are so put, will not be at the pains to understand them.

✧ We shall make an attempt on this line at a further stage of our discussion. Meanwhile, we shall try to show that it was the realistic assumption of pre-Kantian empiricism which worked itself out in the hands of the Scottish sceptic whose failure to make Locke consistent was but an indication of the self-contradictory nature of the fundamental realistic dogma. The general impression that Hume's was a sensationalistic philosophy and that Kant laid bare the fallacy of the philosophy of abstract feeling has had its disastrous consequences. Unconscious of the deeper foundation of empiricism,

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and interpreting Kant's criticism as a mere intellectualistic retort to sensationalistic exaggeration, contemporary thinkers have fallen victim to the same realistic dogma which Hume thought it beyond his power to abandon and which Kant found it beyond his power to accept. This is surely subversive of the real object of philosophical activities. Our aim, therefore, is to show, in however imperfect a form, that Kant's answer to Hume has thoroughly undermined the only basis upon which all forms of realism must ultimately stand, and consequently the realistic and empirical philosophies of our time, in spite of what value they may possess for students of philosophy do not represent a real development of thought. If we attempt a brief formulation of the underlying principle of empiricism it will be found to consist in the assumption that the "unconnected manifold" have a superior reality in comparison to their unity. From this assumption follow several others, namely, that the object is but an assemblage of different sensations held together by the arbitrary bonds of association, the self is likewise a bundle of perceptions which may as well be conceived as not forming such a bundle, and the relation between the object and the self is purely mechanical so that the cognitive relation which brings them together has no

effect upon their intrinsic natures. In all these, the distinctions are emphasized at the expense of their unity, and the inevitable result is atomism. This atomism expresses itself in various forms in Hume. It is not only apparent in his account of the self and the world, but is the fundamental thought underlying his conceptions of the criterion of truth, the nature of abstract ideas, space and time, no less than his analysis of man's moral nature and political obligation. His method everywhere is the same. He picks out the momentary aspects of the concrete reality, considers them apart from each other, and emphasizes them in their abstract character to such an extent as to reduce their relation and unity into mere illusions or words without meaning. Hence his injunction that if in philosophy a word is used without meaning, the best course to expose it is to ask for the impression from which the idea has been derived. Nominalism, solipsism, individualism, and scepticism which are so characteristic of Hume's works are but the natural results of this original abstraction.

When we come to contemporary philosophy in its realistic and empirical forms we find that in spite of the gulf that separates the modern thinkers from Locke and Hume, they are faithful followers of the latter so far as their

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fundamental tenet is concerned. This tenet is essentially that of Locke and Hume; namely, that all the existing things are "distinct existences" having no necessary relations among them. That is, the fundamental assumption of these current philosophical streams is that the different beings are substantial existences, and their relations are but extrinsic in the sense that they make no difference to the terms between which they hold. Like Locke's simple ideas they "carry with them in their own nature no visible necessary connections or inconsistency with any other simple ideas."¹ The consequences of this position in current philosophy are similar to those of the Lockian and the Humian speculations—nominalism, solipsism and scepticism. Indeed it requires only a little careful scrutiny to discover that the whole of the pre-Kantian empiricism has been revived in its essential respects under the names of pragmatism and neo-realism, while the permanent contributions made to philosophy by Kant have been missed in the breathless haste for original system-building.

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It is true that the empirical method has been sometimes differently formulated. Thus Mr Alexander points out that the word

¹ *Essay* II. 23. 3.

empirical is intended to mean nothing more than the method used in the special sciences, it is equivalent to experiential.¹ Similarly W. James identifies it with the natural science method, in his preface to the *Principles of Psychology*. But the philosophical contrast between the non-empirical or *a priori* method and the empirical method can be perhaps better articulated only when we formulate the former as that which goes from the whole to the part, from the unity to the diversity; and the latter should then be described as that which goes from the part to the whole, from the diversity to the unity. This contrast is accentuated in several places by James himself, when he says, for instance, that the most pregnant difference between empiricism and rationalism is that empiricism means the habit of explaining wholes by parts and rationalism means the habit of explaining parts by wholes.² The difference, he points out further, between monistic idealism and radical empiricism leads to a great question of vital importance, "the question, namely, whether all the relations with other things, possible to a

¹ *Space, Time and Deity*, Vol. I. p. 4.

² See *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, p. 41; *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 7; *Some Problems of Philosophy*, p. 35; Preface to Hoffding's *Problem of Philosophy*.

being, are pre-included in its intrinsic nature and enter into its essence, or whether, in respect of some of these relations, it can *be* without reference to them." Empiricism, according to him, must decide in favour of the latter alternative, because when the manuscript is *on* the desk the relation of being "on" does not seem to implicate or involve in any way the inner meaning of the manuscript or the inner structure of the desk.¹ This externality of relation is the fundamental, and from the philosophical stand-point the most important, point which unites contemporary realism with pragmatism and distinguishes both of them from intellectualism, idealism and rationalism. "The theory which the realist finds used so frequently by his opponents" is "the theory of internal relations" which holds that "the parts or elements are all constituted by their relations to all other parts in the complex."² Realism, on the other hand, must insist on the theory of the externality of relations and recognise that the terms are in no way altered by the relations established between them and that the entity does not lose its identity by being a constituent of different complexes. This, according to Mr. Russell, is the indisputable

¹ *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 80.

² *New Realism*, p. 165.

basis of realism. Thus it is clear that both pragmatism and realism look upon the world as a collection or aggregate in which all the existents are related to one another by the relation of and. This and, says Mr. Russell, represents a fundamental way of combining terms.¹ One is irresistibly reminded here of Locke's definition of substances as collection of ideas, or Berkeley's conception of the idea entering into an external and non-modifying relation to the percipient mind, and finally of Hume's division of philosophical relations into two classes, namely, those that depend entirely on the ideas and those that may be changed without any change in the ideas. In view of the crucial nature of the point under consideration, it may be useful to treat these similarities in a little more detail.

Locke, Berkeley and Hume are generally known as representatives of empiricism and phenomenalism. But there was a deeper bond existing between them of which their empiricism or phenomenalism was but a result. This was the common realistic foundation of their systems. In fact, Berkeley's system was idealistic only in name and aim. It cannot even be said to be what Royce calls a

The common-
basis of
empiri-
cism and
realism

¹ *Principles of Mathematics*, p. 71.

half-way idealism, as its fundamental assumption was through-and-through realistic. The tenet of Berkeley's pseudo-idealism has worked itself out in contemporary realism, which has for its ultimate basis an assumption that formed Berkeley's intellectual heritage; but its incompatibility with his system he never detected, at least in his earlier works. This will surely be challenged by the realists of our time. For, is it not the very mission of neo-realism, they will point out, to prove against Berkeley the independence of the experienced on the act of experience? Does not Berkeley together with other idealists commit the Verbal Fallacy of Psycho-physical Metonymy?¹ A negative reply has already been given to this by many realists who have drawn attention to the passage in which Berkeley too makes such a distinction. Prof. Laird again, in his brilliant article in *Mind* to which we have already referred, while indicating the numerous points of contact between Berkeley and the neo-realists goes so far as to declare that "it would scarcely be possible to conceive of a system which, in its intention, was more thoroughly realistic than Berkeley's." They have not, however, detected a more fundamental relation which binds

¹ *New Realism*, p. 259.

neo-realism with Berkeley's philosophy, yet that is much more vital than anything that has hitherto been brought forth. What is this vital agreement?

(Berkeley's central thesis that the *esse* of things is their *percipi* conceals a theory of independent entities which is indeed the corner-stone of all realistic metaphysics. In spite of what he says about the dependence of the things upon a percipient mind, the "ideas" and the mind perceiving them are supposed to enter into a temporary external relation to each other like impervious atoms which remain unmodified and uninfluenced by any casual relation subsisting between them.) Mr. Joachim's description of the realistic view on the cognitive relation is instructive in this connection. "Atom on one side comes together with atom on the other side; but why *this* atom should be related to *that*, or indeed any atom to any other, is a question which cannot be answered. It cannot be answered, for there is no rational ground for the relation."¹ So long as this position is accepted, as a true representation of facts, one is inevitably on the realistic basis, and it is immaterial whether those atoms are called ideas, impressions, *sensa* or

¹ *The Nature of Truth*, p. 44.

character-complexes. This atomism which was never doubted by Locke, Berkeley and Hume made their systems essentially incompatible with any form of true idealism. (It may be added that atomism is the ultimate foundation of not only realism but of empiricism as well, and so a realist has consistently to be an empiricist.) Thus W. James has to admit on the one hand that "mine is essentially a mosaic philosophy, a philosophy of plural facts, like that of Hume and his descendants,"¹ and, on the other hand, he finds that "radical empiricism has in fact more affinities with natural realism than with the views of Berkeley or of Mill."²

Hume's
statement
of the re-
alistic
position.

Hume, in spite of his differences from Locke and Berkeley, is at one with them, so far as their realistic assumption is concerned. In him, however, that assumption appears in its absolute nakedness, shorn of the dogmatic and theological embellishments. The shortest and at the same time the clearest statement of Hume's philosophical basis is perhaps to be found in the following remarks of his on the immateriality of the soul: "If . . . any one should evade the difficulty by saying that the definition of a substance is *something which may exist*

¹ *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, p. 42.

² *Ibid*, p. 76.

by itself . . . I should observe that this definition agrees to everything that can possibly be conceived, and never will serve to distinguish substance from accident, or the soul from its perceptions. For, thus I reason. Whatever is clearly conceived may exist; and whatever is clearly conceived, after any manner, may exist after the same manner Again, every thing which is different is distinguishable, and everything which is distinguishable is separable by the imagination . . . My conclusion from both is that since all our perceptions are different from each other, and from everything else of the universe, they are also distinct and separable, and may be considered as separately existent, and may exist separately, and have no need of anything else to support their existence. They are therefore substances, as far as this definition explains a substance."¹ If we agree to make concession to the peculiar way in which Hume states his fundamental position, no realist would perhaps find it possible to give a clearer exposition of his philosophy within the limits of such a few lines. It is true that one of the vital points of difference between neo-realism and its older name-sake consists in its protest against the

¹*Treatise*, Sec., V., p. 223.

substantialism of Locke and Reid. But, for all this, it clings to substantialism of the type which Berkeley and Hume found so essential to their systems, and while this position remains the same there is no reason why their conclusion should be reversed.

There are two more points with regard to which the contemporary realists and empiricists have been slow to appreciate Kant's answer to Hume. The belief that reality is a creative process, a flux or pure becoming, and that mind is one among other finite things holding its place on equal terms with them, has found recognition with the majority of eminent thinkers of our time. Thus, for example, as a protest against the indestructible entities of physics, Mr. B. Russell insists that "the world of immediate data is quite different from this. Nothing is permanent; even the things that we think are fairly permanent, such as mountains, only become data when we see them, and are not immediately given as existing at other moments."¹ Similarly, Mr. Whitehead urges that the immediate fact for awareness is "Nature as an event present for sense-awareness and essentially passing. There is no holding nature still and looking at it."² For the

¹ *Our Knowledge of the External world*, p. 104.

² *The Concept of Nature*, p. 14.

realistic account of mind and its place in reality, we need but look at the unambiguous language of Professor Alexander: "For realism, mind has no privileged place in the democracy of things . . . Mind again is a form of time, because the mind-quality emerges out of the time element like all other empirical qualities."¹ Such passages are strongly reminiscent of the favourite tenets of pre-Kantian empiricism. The transcendental method of proof, as is well-known, was intended to bring out the inherent deficiency of a philosophy which sought to construct the house of experience out of a mere flux of ideas destitute of inner necessity or internal determination, and which regarded mind from the psychological point of view as one object among others. In fact, it is no violence to Hume's position to say that his was essentially a philosophy of becoming quite as much as a philosophy of "distinct existences". If he is never tired of insisting that all the particular perceptions "are different, and distinguishable, and separable, from each other, and may be separately considered, and may exist separately, and have no need of anything to support their existence"; he is equally emphatic in his assertion that the different perceptions "succeed

¹ *Space, Time and Deity*, Vol. II, p. 44.

each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement".¹ As to the dislodgment of mind from its privileged place of autocratic supremacy, Mr. Alexander and his followers are but celebrating, with clearer consciousness, a festival for which an elaborate arrangement was made by the author of the '*Essay concerning Human Understanding*.' Postponing the consideration of these aspects of contemporary thought, we may revert, for a moment, to that realistic dogma which, as suggested above, is the indispensable foundation of every realistic metaphysics.

The
status of
entities in
neo-
realism

The difficulties which for Hume were insuperable arose ultimately, as we have emphasised above, from his inability to abandon the belief in an unalterable impervious atomic existence. Kant's reply to Hume, as is well known, consisted precisely in pointing out that the connections, far from being external to the atomic existences, entered into their intrinsic nature, that each existence possessed a being not in its self-seclusion and unrelatedness but in its self-transcendence or relatedness to existences beyond itself. This position has been accepted by many eminent philosophers after Kant. Take any single object, they challenge, and think away all the connections that

¹ *Treatise*, p. 239.

hold between itself and other things, and see if that object does not reduce itself to a non-entity. "The more we remove," says Lotze, "from the conception of Being every thought of a relation, in the affirmation of which it might consist, the more completely the possibility of this distinction (between Being and non-Being) disappears."¹ "To be thus void of relation is just that in which we should find the non-entity of a thing if it was our purpose to define it." Things, that is, do not exist at first in separation from each other so that all connections between them would be mere fortuitous generalizations: on the contrary, their existence has no intelligible meaning except in relation to each other. What we call the real existence of the world is constituted by the various relations, spatial, temporal, causal etc., subsisting between things, and each thing is what it is only through its relations. Green puts the whole position in the most lucid form when he remarks: "Abstract the many relations from the one thing, and there is nothing. They, being many, determine or constitute its definite unity. It is not the case that it first exists in its unity, and then is brought into various relations. Without the relations it would not exist at all."²

¹ *Metaphysics*, Vol. I. p. 39.

² *Prolegomena*, § 28,

It is a further consequence of this line of thought that there can be no real entity possessed of an intrinsic nature of its own which is not influenced by the various relations into which that entity may enter. All things are dependent upon other things in so far as their very nature is determined by those mutual relations. The possibility of an unalterable entity entering into different relations would be intelligible only if the being of that entity had not consisted in relations; but once it is admitted that a thing is nothing apart from its relations to other things, the unalterability of an entity in different groups or relations could be maintained only by a manifest inconsistency. { But contemporary realism must reject the premise that all relations are internal and recognise that while all things may perhaps be related, many of these relations are not constitutive or determinative; they do not enter into the explanation of the nature or existence of their terms.¹ Thus, for example, the spatial relation between the book and the table is not a constitutive relation, because, as James points out, any book and any table may fall into the relation by their casual situation. \

¹ *New Realism*, p. 33.

The entire controversy, we believe, owes its life to a fatal ambiguity. W. James, as a faithful exponent of the empirical attitude, takes the table and the book as purely sense-given facts, and as the empirical bias is ingrained in common-sense, there is a certain amount of obviousness about his position. The strength of the opposite position, on the other hand, lies in rejecting the suggestion that the table or the book is a mere sense-given fact. The table, it would urge, is not what is presented to mere sense; on the contrary, it is the result of interpretations and so presupposes the relating activity of thought. Consequently, if relations are considered to be extrinsic, then the question inevitably arises: how is it that only a table and a book can fall into this relation and not certain other things? If the relation is a mere coincidence there is no rational ground why this particular thing should fall into relation with that particular thing. In fact, the relation is not casual; it is as much the nature of the table to have the book upon itself as it is the nature of the book to be upon the table, just as it is the nature of the sun to warm the stone, and also the nature of the stone to become warm under the sun. To continue this example of Kant, if the sun sometimes warms the stone and sometimes does not, we should have to say that the sun has changed

A thing
presup-
poses
innum-
erable judg-
ments.

its nature; similarly, if the table sometimes supports the book and sometimes does not, we should also grant that the table has undergone a change of nature. It is no objection to say that though the table has the possibility of having the book on itself, yet it would remain what it is even if no books were ever placed upon it. Because then this remark would apply to the sun as well. Both the table and the sun might be defined without reference to the book or the stone, but what is important to observe is that our definitions in such cases are not complete. As our knowledge increases, many of the relations which were formerly supposed to be non-constitutive and non-determinative are found to be intimately bound up with the nature of the things. This evidently indicates the arbitrary nature of the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic relations. "Now that for working purposes," it is rightly remarked by Bradley, "we treat some relations as external merely I do not deny, and that, of course, is not the question at issue here. That question is in short whether this distinction of internal and external is absolute or is but relative, and whether in the end and in principle a mere external relation is possible and forced on us by the facts . . . Every space. . . would be a whole in which the parts throughout

are inter-related already in every possible position, and reciprocally so determine one another. . . . And from this the conclusion cannot be drawn that the terms are inwardly indifferent to their relations; for the whole internal character of the terms, it seems, goes out, on the contrary, and consists in these."¹

It does not appear to have struck any of the neo-realists that in spite of their emphatic rejection of all mystical metaphysics and adoption of the scientific stand-point, their own procedure implies a theory of reals which can hardly be distinguished from that of, say, Leibnitz and Herbart on the one hand, and of Parmenides on the other. In their zeal against the internality of relations which is considered to be one of the grounds of idealism, they have been led to propound a theory of simple entities which are as indefinable and chimerical as the absolutely exclusive Many of pluralism or the pure Being of mystical universalism. The simple entities, it is urged, may enter into this or that group but they do not belong to it, they depend on no relation, they are the entities at large and belong exclusively to no constituency.² As thus described, it is difficult to see how these simple

This truth is missed by contemporary realism, which leads to a difficulty.

¹ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 576.

² *New Realism*, p. 129.

entities of the neo-realists differ from the "reals" of Herbart in the enjoyment of pure "position" void of all relations. Like the pure Being of the Eleatic school, each simple entity has a being of its own, "substantial and self-dependent and the difficulty then is to drag it out of this state of ontological seclusion into the region of empirical reality with its thousand relations."¹

The distinction between relation and dependence does not remove the real difficulty.

These remarks, it may be retorted, do not apply to the realistic conception of the independent simple elements which are not unrelated to one another. All that is claimed is that they do not depend upon those relations and so "it is fundamentally characteristic of neo-realism to distinguish relation and dependence". "Given two entities they will be dependent upon each other only when one is a part of the other or implies the other, or is exclusively determined by a system in which it is cause, effect or implication of the other. In the absence of these relations the entities retain their independence whatever other relations may subsist between them." Now the reply is that this distinction between relation and dependence is after all a matter of arbitrary definition. The question at issue is not whether we should *call* one set of

¹ Lotze, *loc. cit.*

relations as those of dependence and another set of relations as those of independence. The real question is whether there can be any relation between two terms which is so external that it does not affect the terms in any way. It has been said that the bare relation between entities is in the great majority of cases discovered before any dependence is proved. Thus, "things may be together in space, may succeed one another in time, may be different, more, less, whether or not they are whole and part, cause and effect, or implier and implied." This position may be conceded at once, and yet it may be denied that a thing remains what it is whether it is co-existent or successive, more or less, in relation to another thing. In fact, if there had been no fixed rule according to which one event can only succeed but never precede another there would be no consciousness of succession at all. To borrow the well-known example of Kant, had the relation of succession been really external to the nature of the positions of the boat moving down stream, so that the relation would make no difference to the terms, there could be no knowledge of objective succession at all as distinct from co-existence. It is not, therefore, immaterial for the terms which of the possible relations would subsist between them. The relation, far from being extrinsic to

the terms are constitutive, so that the same term in all its concreteness cannot be in different relations.

An idealistic position alone can cope with it.

We are then compelled to conclude that the simple entities of the neo-realists are existences essentially indistinguishable from atomic entities void of all relations. If then neo-realism has to accept the theory of relationless existences, it is subject to those well known criticisms which Parmenides and Leibnitz, Hume and Herbart have received at the hands of the idealists from Plato to Hegel, Lotze or Bradley. And these criticisms are so thorough and convincing that nothing but an ineradicable prejudice can account for the revival of the realistic theory of pure being in contemporary philosophy. The occasional revival, however, of Hume's position in the history of thought in spite of its inherent paradox is a clear proof that atomism represents one of the fundamental attitudes of human mind. Yet, the fact remains that atomism is ultimately untenable; its defects can be removed only by some sort of idealistic interpretation of reality, and the clue to such an interpretation must be found in the recognition of the important rôle of thought in knowledge.

CHAPTER III

Idealism *versus* Realism

The root-fallacy of contemporary empirico-realistic systems, as we have maintained in the last chapter, consists in an atomistic bias which is responsible for their sceptical and individualistic tendencies. Abstract individualism, however, ultimately refutes itself, as every system is bound to do when it is based, either consciously or unconsciously, on the fatal omission of the part which thought plays in the building up of knowledge. On the other hand, a philosophical position which has its moorings in thought should by contrast be called universalism or concrete individualism, but these have come to be associated with doctrines that have not always kept within the limits of thought and are thus of doubtful value for an interpretation which knows no other authority than thought or reason.

Conflict-
ing
meanings
of
'Idealism

Such a position may perhaps be best described as an idealistic interpretation of Reality. But, again, the term idealism, like its opposite, realism, has been used with such

diverse implications that it has led an eminent thinker to complain that these terms have degenerated into traditional battle-cries and are thus no longer fit for use as names of precision. Thus, for instance, Berkeley's philosophy has been supposed on the one hand to be thoroughly realistic in its intention,¹ and, on the other hand, it has been claimed that Reid's realism "might pass into the most extreme idealism."² The distinction is, in fact, one of emphasis only, and consequently it is obscured when we attempt to discover a definite basis.

To realise the lack of precision and the resulting difficulties in the conception of this distinction, one need only look at the different *fundamenta divisionis* that have been proposed by different thinkers. Realism, it is sometimes said, must insist on the independence of the objects of experience in general over against the idealistic contention of their dependence on the experiencing mind. More frequently, the distinction is supposed to rest on a more

¹ Prof. Laird, *Berkeley's Realism*, an article in *Mind*, 1916, p. 308—Mr. Laird refers also to Professors Alexander and Dawes Hicks as being among those who have detected the 'realistic spirit of Berkeley's philosophy.

² Bosanquet, *The Essentials of Logic*, p. 10.

restricted basis, namely, the relation between the perceiving mind and the external world revealed in perception. It is this narrower problem which generally comes to the foreground in controversies, and then realism is thought to consist in the assertion that the external world which is before the mind in perception is not dependent on the perceiving subject. This general position again is accepted by different realists with different degrees of qualification, some insisting on the independence of the external world in its existence as well as qualities, others making the qualities dependent on the perceptual context. As thus defined, it is difficult to distinguish realism from that type of idealism which is represented, say, by T. H. Green who urges unambiguously that "the fact that there is a real external world . . . is one which no philosophy disputes."¹

The demarcation line is sometimes drawn at a different place, and the centre of emphasis is shifted from the external world to the conception of time. Thus, a theory is often called idealistic in so far as it underestimates the temporal aspect of the real world. In this sense idealism has invited criticism generally from

¹ Works, Vol. I, p. 376.

those who feel themselves to be on the sound footing of factual experience only by accepting unreservedly the reality of time and the creative process of the universe as a whole. Yet, however, there are not only philosophers who, like James Ward, have tried to fit the conception of an epigenetic or creative process into an essentially idealistic framework, but it is one of the basic contentions of the neo-idealist that the universe, which for him is a self-creative energy, is essentially a process, a 'divenire', and this implies, in some form or other, that time is a fundamental feature of the real world.

Finally, the term idealism has been so used as to cover "all those philosophies which agree in maintaining that spiritual values have a determining voice in the ordering of the universe,"¹ or, as A. S. Pringle-Pattison puts it following the Indian philosopher Kapila, spirit is the "*terminus ad quem* of nature."² Here, again, the distinctive feature of idealism becomes vague when we remember that even for such an arch-realist as Prof. Alexander the universe is a hierarchy of qualities, or God engaged in process towards

¹ N. K. Smith *Prolegomena to an Idealistic Theory of Knowledge*, p. 1.

² *The Idea of God*, p. 200.

the emergence of deity; and he is never tired of insisting that the universe flows into deity, that the deity is a new quality above man to which the whole world tends, or that every being has "the nîsus to a higher form in so far as it contributes to the general nîsus of the world."¹

In view of this prevailing confusion, it may be useful to indicate at the outset the specific sense in which our position may be called idealistic. Now, idealism, as we understand it and shall try to defend here, is the belief or doctrine according to which thought is the medium of the self-expression of Reality; or, to put it from the other side, Reality is such as must necessarily express itself through the ideal or ideals that are organic to the knower's intellectual equipment which may be called thought or reason. Further explication of this position in contrast with the different forms of idealism and realism as these are generally understood will be found at the different stages of our arguments. Meanwhile, it may be clear even from this brief description that the sense in which the term idealism is used in those pages is not entirely opposed to what has the sanction of those philosophers who are traditionally known as the 'idealists *par excellence*.

A definition of
Idealism.

¹ *Space, Time and Deity*, p. 418.

And, in fact, it will be useful, in expounding our position, to make frequent references to the explicit opinions of the idealist on most of the crucial points. (Moreover, this position is surely idealistic, if we take the idealistic interpretation of experience to mean an interpretation in which a privileged position is assigned to mind, and as such, distinct from the realistic attitude for which the mind is only one among those many things which exist in the universe, having no privileged place in the democracy of things.) The superiority of mind, according to the definition of idealism given here, consists in this that the mind of man is taken to be the organ through which Reality expresses itself) and if it be conceded that man alone has the capacity to interpret experience in the light of intellectual ideals, then it follows also that it is man alone that can be an organ to Reality, and in this respect, he has a unique position in the economy of the universe. We have so far tried to state in a short and clear form what idealism is; but, for a greater precision of meaning, it is also necessary to say what it is not.

Miscon-
ceptions
about
Idealism

The term idealism is generally associated in the minds of laymen as well as philosophers with a realistic attitude, with the doctrine which, either overtly or covertly, seeks to

establish that the whole choir of heaven and earth is unreal, or, at least, is not so real as it appears to be to native commonsense. That idealism, somehow or other, detracts from the concrete reality of the universe is the common impression which is responsible for the widespread reaction against idealism in all its forms. And as the tendency of idealism has always been to accentuate the importance of minds in some form or other, it is generally thought that the best method of preserving the reality of all that we care for in life against the damaging interpretations of the idealist, is to place the trifling and insignificant nature of mind beyond all doubt. Now, the first thing which we should make clear in the beginning is that idealism, as we understand it, does not take away in the least the reality of anything which is considered as real by commonsense or science. Far from subtracting anything from the common things of the world, idealism adds to the reality of the things, in so far as it alone makes it clear that things have far other aspects of their life than those which are revealed to commonsense or to science. "Certainly for myself," it is remarked by Bosanquet, for instance, "if an idealist were to tell me that a chair is really not what we commonly take it to be, but something altogether different,

I should be tempted to reply in language below the dignity of controversy."¹ Similarly, a philosophy must stand self-condemned if it thinks itself competent to establish that the electronic constitution of matter or the inner structure of the material particles are no better than the merest figments of imagination. Even if it comes to be true in the long run that the electrons, like their precursors, namely, ether-vortices and indestructible *plenum*, are nothing really existing in nature, it need not necessarily be the business of philosophy either to justify or to dispute their existence.

Philosophy and science

This of course does not mean that philosophy cannot criticise the categories of the physicist or of commonsense. In fact, there is an important sense in which philosophy is essentially a criticism of such categories. In so far as science is concerned, it would be a purely unwarranted assumption that the hypothetical entities postulated by the man of science can never be merely arbitrary fictions; for, the history of science is itself an emphatic refutation of such an assumption. A scientific category, notwithstanding the prestige it may enjoy in the eyes of the scientists of a particular age, may, for a subsequent age, be a

¹ *Contemporary Philosophy*, p. 5.

fictitious entity. And it is realised to be fictitious in proportion to its failure to fit into the ideal scheme of the world which the scientist carries in his pocket, howsoever unconscious he may be of the fact that he does so. But, nonetheless, philosophy cannot anticipate what particular category of science will ultimately fit into the scheme of a harmonious world, and in this sense he must leave it to the scientist to discover the special nature of the material things.

Again, in so far as the categories of commonsense are concerned, Bosanquet seems to be on the whole right when he says that the scientist's standpoint does not contradict what the chairmaker says about the chair. Even when the chair is found in its ultimate nature to be the stage for the dance of electrons and protons, for instance, that does not contradict the upholsterer's description that it is an article of furniture in a drawing-room. There would be a contradiction only if he had said that the chair is *nothing more* than what is contained in his description, or, again, if he had denied the truth of the scientist's description. Frequently, however, the commonsense description contains a commonsense philosophy; and then it is the business of science or philosophy to put it to the test of systematic thought, and

Philoso-
phy and
common-
sense

see whether the commonsense category is right or not.

It may, therefore, be remarked in a general way that philosophy, without taking upon itself the difficult task of discovering the special nature of every thing that exists in the world through a purely "thinking consideration" of things, can reveal, as suggested above, far other aspects of things than what is discoverable by the experimental method of science, or the uncritical method of commonsense. In fact, one of the perennial complaints of the idealists against the realistic interpretation of the world has been that realism takes the things at their "face-value" and so fails to overcome the vice of abstraction and reveal the real world in its full concreteness. Hence, to accuse idealism of replacing the concrete world of commonsense and science by a figment of imagination is, one is compelled to surmise, founded on a serious misconception of the idealistic contentions.

Idealism
does not
deny the
reality of
matter

Allied with the above misconception of the true mission of the idealist, there is another which is connected with the problem of the relation between subject and object. Idealism, it is widely supposed, is so-called precisely because it reduces the world of matter to a world of mind-dependent ideas, so that the vast

material world that surrounds us on all sides and which is commonly believed to have existed long before the birth of particular men or perhaps of the human race in general becomes at the hands of the idealist as much dependent upon man's mind as the imaginary world of a drama or fairy-land.) If this be the real meaning of idealism, then it is not such a doctrine which we seek to expound in these pages. It is, however, extremely unlikely that any philosopher has seriously attempted to defend such an absurd quixotic opinion, and though Berkeley, of all the idealists, does use language which perilously comes near such a phantastic view, he also gives suggestions of a better type of idealism than what appears on the surface. Of this, however, we shall have to speak in more details later. What needs emphasis at this place is that true idealism has never disputed the real existence of the external world of matter. Thus, as we have noted above, Green says in no uncertain voice: ("The fact that there is a real external world of which through feeling we have a determinate experience and that in this experience all our knowledge of nature is implicit, is one which no philosophy disputes") and then it is added, almost in an indignant tone, that "what Mr. Spencer understands by 'idealism,'

is what a raw undergraduate understands by it. It means to him a doctrine that 'there is no such thing as matter,' or that 'the external world is merely the creation of our own minds'—a doctrine expressly rejected by Kant, and which has had no place since his time in any idealism that knows what it is about."¹ It is sufficiently clear from these significant remarks of one of the most prominent idealists of the modern period, that the line of demarcation between idealism and realism cannot be drawn where it is ordinarily drawn even to our own day, and that sometimes by thinkers of repute. Here the extremes might meet in spite of their traditional opposition, and the realist might join hands with the idealist through the transparent barrier created by the popular imagination. (That is, there is no difference between the realistic and the idealistic creed, in so far as the reality of the material world is concerned; for both, there is a real external world which is not the creation of our minds.)

Realism
does not
see the
world in
its fulness.

But, after this meeting-point, their paths diverge; and the divergence is due to the idealist's belief that reality of the so-called external world has implications which are not

¹ *Works, I., p. 386.*

recognised either by commonsense or by the realist; yet, without them the external world can have no claim to real existence. In this sense, the world, for the idealist, is more real than what it is supposed to be by the realist. The realistic explanation, paradoxical as it may appear to be, does not concede as much reality to the world as it in reality contains. So, far from detracting from the reality of the stupendous material world in space and time, the idealistic explanation posits its reality more emphatically than the realistic assertion; and so far the real world, instead of being levelled down, is in fact levelled up. This is the most important of the idealistic contentions which no one desiring to do justice to the idealistic standpoint can afford to ignore. Yet, it must be admitted that most of the criticisms which are generally levelled against idealism have their source in a vague belief that the world does not get its dues from the idealist, and for this mistaken belief, it must be also admitted in fairness, the idealists are perhaps as much to blame as the realists. If the latter have misinterpreted the idealist's explanations, the reason is not to be found entirely in their unwillingness or deliberate obstinacy to meet the facts squarely; on the contrary, the realists, specially of the open-minded

type, have always tried to appreciate the view-point of the opposite party. It is the expressions and the modes of presentation peculiar to the idealists which are perhaps responsible, to a large extent, for the widespread misunderstanding of their standpoint. The idealists, in general, have a tendency to indulge in certain stock phrases and trite expressions some of which are open to different interpretations ; and hence in spite of their best intentions, they fail to carry conviction with those who begin with the popular suspicion about the idealistic spitting away of the real world of commonsense and science.

Disadvantages
of an
idealistic
interpretation.

On the other hand, the idealist has peculiar disadvantages of his own. The realistic instinct is so strong with us all, that it requires an extraordinary speculative effort to break loose from its grip ; and even when it melts away with the progressive analysis of experience, we naturally tend back to the standpoint of commonsense realism. In fact, it is perhaps not too much to say that more than three-fourths of the life of the staunchest idealist is spent in the opponent's camp. The difficulty, however, is not peculiar to philosophy. How much of our life, for instance, is guided by the scientist's world-picture ? Even the most distinguished scientist has to lay aside his revolutionising

theory in the practical conduct of life. When we come to the consideration of a speculative truth, it is not simply a question of thinking with the learned and speaking with the vulgar, as Berkeley supposed; the difficulty is not merely one of language, but of counter-acting our habitual modes of thought. The empirico-realistic bias is ingrained in our habitual ways of thinking and speaking.

The truth of these remarks may be illustrated from Berkeley's philosophy which has historically been the main target for the realist's bullets. This is of course perfectly natural; for, no realistic interpretation can be reasonably advocated till the hollowness of Berkeley's central thesis—the dependence of being on being known—is thoroughly exposed. What is, however, interesting in the contemporary studies of his philosophy is the extremely divergent directions from which the bullets have come, the consequence being that it has become well-nigh impossible to identify the marks left on the target and thus to detect the camps from which the aims are respectively taken. Thus, there are philosophers according to whom his is the only type of genuine idealism; but with this common admission the realist proceeds to expose its fallacies, while the idealist hastens to reinforce its arguments. The contentions of

Revival
of
interest in
Berkeley.

Professors Perry and McTaggart respectively may be taken here as examples. It is not, again, always the idealist who thinks highly of Berkeley's achievements. Even the realists vie with the idealists in their feelings towards 'the good Berkeley' for having laid the foundation of a genuine philosophy. Here, again, the attitudes of Prof. Laird and the neo-idealists of Italy may be respectively taken as examples. Finally, it is not, again, always the realist who has detected in Berkeley's philosophy materials for condemnation. Even the idealists join the realists in rejecting his system as a mere subjective idealism which, in the words of Green, is the raw undergraduate's conception of idealism.

Adumbration of
Genuine
Idealism
in
Berkeley's
Philosophy.

We have emphasised in the last chapter the realistic assumption of Berkeley's position which makes it essentially incompatible with any form of genuine idealism. It would be, however, doing less than justice to his genius, if we had not noted in his position the germs of true idealism which he was prevented by his atomistic predilection from developing. Berkeley's central doctrine that *esse is percipi*, has, according to his own admission, something of a paradoxical appearance about it. That knowledge presupposes a reality which antedates and postdates the event of knowing, and that

experiencing makes no difference to the existence or quality of the reality experienced, are apparently so obvious facts that a theory which questions these plain facts of commonsense stands almost self-condemned. But the real difficulty of the common-sense position is made prominent only when we have, for the exigencies of analysis, to distinguish between the immediate objects of perception and the real world of things to which knowledge points. The distinctions which even commonsense does not hesitate to make between appearance and reality, the illusory and the real, raise problems of much tougher stuff than what unaided commonsense can satisfactorily solve. Hence, it is one of the repeated warnings of Berkeley that by sensible things, we are to understand those things alone that are perceived immediately by the senses and not those that are mediately known 'by means of' the sensible things. Having clearly realised the difficulties involved in the representative theory of perception and having no other conception of mediation than the reference to a world beyond the possibility of experience, he set to himself the task of exposing the absurdity of allowing to the sensible things an independent existence apart from the perceiving mind. And his main

arguments are directed to show that the objects which vary with the varying contexts of experience cannot be supposed to have an absolute existence, and as mind is the universal element entering into all the contexts, the objects are always in relation to the mind.)

There are no doubt other types of arguments which are also pressed into the service of his spiritualistic thesis, and then instead of restricting himself to showing the conditioned nature of the sensible things he appears to argue that the world of things cannot exist in the intervals of perception by a mind, either finite or divine. We shall consider the latter position in the next chapter. All that may be observed here is that in so far as he identifies the sensible things with the real world, it is, we believe, an extremely untenable position, and in this respect all the arguments of the realists against the mentalistic doctrines are unanswerable. What is, however, indispensable for appreciating the position of Berkeley is that by distinguishing the immediate objects of perception from all that is known mediately, he, like his predecessor Locke, raised an important problem which is not as easy of solution as it is generally supposed to be. And the difficulties involved in the problem are sufficiently evident from the modern controversy on the nature of sense data. Into

this controversy, however, it would be hardly relevant to enter here. It is enough to remember that there is still a group of eminent thinkers for whom the immediate objects of perception are events in the mental history of the individual, and not independent entities of the physical world.

It is, however, well known that Berkeley omitted, in the later editions of his works, the particular passage in which he had explicitly identified sensations with objects. This shows clearly that he did not think this identification to be essentially connected with his central doctrine. What then remains of his position as thus truncated is given at the beginning of his work, namely, the world is my idea. Now, to appreciate this apparently paradoxical doctrine, we must make a few observations on the meaning of 'idea'.

How we perceive external objects, Reid points out,¹ is a difficult problem with many ancient and modern philosophers. Plato's illustration of men bound to a dark subterranean cave and knowing only the shadows of reality gave rise to this problem. These shadows of Plato represent the species and phantasms of the Peripatetic school, and the

What is
an idea?
Its popular
meaning.

¹ *Works*, Hamilton's edition, Vol. I, p. 262.

ideas and impressions of modern philosophers. Descartes, while rejecting only a part of the Peripatetic system—namely, that images come from the external objects, adopted the other part—that the external object itself is not perceived. For this adoption, however, Reid contends, Descartes does not give reasons. All philosophers from Plato to Hume agree that we do not perceive external objects immediately. It is owing to this “original defect” that the “ideal system” leads to scepticism. Our analysis, therefore, must discard that doctrine, and should be inspired by the belief that our knowledge involves from the very beginning certain “judgments of nature—judgments not got by comparing ideas and perceiving agreements and disagreements, but immediately inspired by our constitution.” This, as explained by A. Seth, means that “we do not have sensation first, and refer them afterwards to a subject and an object; our first having of a sensation is at the same time the knowledge of a present object and of that object as somehow related to me.”¹

It is not our present purpose to enquire how far Reid is justified in assimilating Plato's view on our knowledge of the external world to that

¹ *Scottish Philosophy*, p. 78.

of Hume, or why Kant's speculations about the external world did not lead to scepticism in spite of the fact that he never questioned, as has been sometimes maintained,¹ the fundamental assumption of the "ideal system." All we can do here is simply to remember that it is possible in the one case to think that Plato "does not volatilise, so to speak, our world of facts and externality, but accepting for it all that it claims of existence and reality, then passes on to interpret its conditions, and assigns its significance more profoundly."² And in the other case, it is equally possible so to interpret Kant's thoughts as to distinguish them from the false view of idealism according to which the external world is merely the creation of our own minds—"a doctrine expressly rejected by Kant and which has had no place since his time in any idealism that knows what it is about."³

It must be however admitted that the idealistic contention that the world is my idea is extremely liable to misinterpretation, owing to the association the term "idea" has acquired in our minds. By an idea we ordinarily mean a mental picture, a representation or copy

¹ A. Seth : *Ibid.*, p. 150. *

² Bosanquet : *Contemporary Philosophy*, p. 2.

³ Green : *Works*, I, p. 386.

of a thing outside the mind. As thus understood, it is manifestly absurd to reduce the outside thing to the idea; we should rather think the thing to be the antecedent condition of the idea. We may go further and admit that the difficulty in this case arises to a large extent from the conditions of our discursive thought which understands by division, and defines by exclusion. Owing to this dichotomous intellect we have to make our notion of 'idea' definite only by contrasting it with what is *not* an idea; and evidently the most natural candidate for such a contrast is the ideatum or the thing which the idea is said to represent. That is, the ideas have for adult consciousness a reference beyond themselves to something non-mental in contradistinction from which they are defined. Hence the realist has always the advantage of this popular distinction whenever the idealist speaks of the world as my idea; and in spite of the indignant protest of the latter that he should be so grossly misunderstood, the former continues to consider idealism to be a doctrine which somehow or other, attempts to spin the world of reality out of psychical existences. At this stage, physiology intervenes to put upon the popular meaning its seal of scientific authority.

Ideas are frequently described in the 'ideal system' as mental or mind-dependent appearances. But have we any scientific basis for calling them mental? This question, it has been urged, drives the subjective idealist to a quandary; for, "he can only prove things perceived to be subjective by proving them to be externally related to objects as their mechanical effects, and yet this can only be done by simultaneously interpreting the things perceived in a manner which the realist standpoint can alone justify."¹ This contention may in fact be substantiated by profuse quotations from the works of the mentalists. When Descartes, for instance, holds that there is no other difference between the mind and its ideas than between a piece of wax and the diverse figures which it can receive, it is difficult to believe that his theory of idea is not influenced by the mechanical standpoint. A similar remark holds good of Locke's new way of ideas. Strangely enough, even Hume frequently talks of external objects "becoming known to us only by those perceptions they occasion." And when we come to Kant, it is found that he too has very often

The Physiological
theory of
idea

¹ N. K. Smith, *Prolegomena to an Idealistic Theory of Knowledge*, p. 53. Compare also his *Commentary to Kant*, p. 587.

the appearance of taking for granted that the ideas are purely mental existences.

The view
of Des-
cartes on
idea

But this fact, we venture to suggest, should not blind us to another aspect of the theory of idea which was coming into prominence in the development of the theory. The term idea, in fact, has been left in a hopeless state of confusion; and the confusion was started by Descartes by his distinction between the *esse formale seu proprium* of an idea and its *esse objectivum seu vicarium*. In the latter aspect, which is the really epistemological aspect, an idea is not a mere psychical event. It is rather whatever the mind contemplates as an object; or, to put it in the language of modern idealism, it is whatever exists for a self. It has been rightly contended that "Descartes means by 'idea' what we call the content of any apprehension."¹ As thus interpreted, there does not seem to be any distinction between idea and phenomenon, in so far as both the terms signify nothing more than this that every object is related to a self for which it exists. This, of course, does not mean that the object is a state of consciousness or a mental event produced by the external stimulus.

¹ Adamson, *Modern Philosophy* p. 40, also p. 36. Adamson also interprets the term as used by Locke in the same sense; see p. 113.

The better meaning of the term idea comes to a clearer prominence in Locke who makes it stand for "whatever is the *object* of the understanding when a man thinks." But he was too much carried away by the apparent simplicity of the mechanical standpoint, and also perhaps too much disgusted at the facile manner in which the theory of innate ideas sought to dispense with the need for sense-experience, to see the essential incompatibility of his psychological method with the epistemological standpoint from which he happened to define 'idea'. The result is that his philosophy in general appears to be influenced by the physiological standpoint alone. Yet, it will only propagate confusion if we forget Green's remark that "physiology will not answer the question that Locke asked;" so to those who think that the merit of his theory of idea consisted in its physiological basis, "we can but respectfully point out that they have not come in sight of the problem which Locke and his followers, on however false a method sought to solve; . . . The question really at issue is not between two co-ordinate sciences, as if a theory of the human body were claiming also to be a theory of the human soul, and theory of the soul were resisting the aggression. The question is whether the conceptions which all the

The view
of Locke

departmental sciences alike presuppose shall have an account given of them or no. . . . The physiologist, when he claims that his science should supersede metaphysic . . . accounts for the formal conceptions in question, in other words, for thought as it is common to all the sciences, as sequent upon the antecedent facts which his science ascertains—the facts of the animal organisation. But these conceptions . . . are necessary to constitute the facts.”¹ Green’s contention is perhaps put in a clearer form by Professor Aliotta. “It is impossible,” he says, “to conceive of the physiological organism without making use of those intuitive forms and categories which are supposed to be deduced therefrom, and it therefore presumes the laws of thought and the activity of the knowing subject.”²

The view
of Hume

Similarly Hume notwithstanding his occasional lapses, does not fail to remind his readers that “when the mind looks further than what immediately appears to it, its conclusions can never be put to the account of the senses,” nor is it possible that our reason “ever should, upon any supposition, give us assurance of the continued and distinct exis-

¹ *Works*, I, pp 164-165.

² *The Idealistic Reaction against Science*, p. 15.

tence of body." In fact, neither Locke nor Hume could seriously accept the physiological theory of sensation.¹ Their problem being to explain how our belief in the external thing grows out of the immediately given sense-data, it was not open to them to start with that belief and explain the sense-data as the effect of external things. So it has been emphatically maintained² that in this respect, "Hume is as much a Berkeleian as Berkeley himself, and they effectually exclude any reference to body from those original impressions, by reference to which all other modes of consciousness are to be explained." It must be however admitted that the real problem raised by the mentalists is never kept clear of the confusion arising

¹ The problems arising out of Locke's 'new way of ideas' could not be solved by physiology. No critic who does not see this is in a position to do justice to the subjective idealists. Yet, the mistake has been very common among the exponents and the critics of the theory of ideas. Cf. Broad, *Scientific Thought* pp. 256, 510; and Bergson, *Mind Energy*, p. 196.

² Green: *Works*, I. p. 163. It is true that Hume's restricted use of the term 'idea' was, as pointed out by J. Ward (*Psychological Principles*, p. 46) a retrograde step; yet, in excluding any reference to body from the original impressions, he was unquestionably truer to the 'new way of ideas' than its author.

from the physiological theory ; in so far as this is the case, Mr. Smith's observations are entirely justified. But what we contend for is that their confusions on this head were due to the difficulty of keeping consistently to a standpoint which was so novel even for themselves that their language very often lagged behind their thought.

The view
of Kant

In so far as Kant is concerned, it will perhaps be conceded by all, at this late hour of the day, that the assumption of the psychological standpoint is not only not indispensable for establishing his main contentions, but that Kant very explicitly dissociates the problem of origin of appearances from his arguments. The tentative character of his analysis in the *Aesthetic* where alone the physiological standpoint is prominent has been recognised by all sympathetic exponents of Kant, and the method of proceeding upon assumptions which are to be later modified was, as Caird points out, characteristic of his analysis, which has the Socratic advantage of gradually leading the reader on from his own ground to the point it was desired to bring him. As thus regarded, the doctrine of the thing-in-itself should not be construed as supporting the mechanical view according to which the sense-appearances are merely affections of the mind, states of

consciousness caused by something beyond consciousness and arranged in accordance with certain forms of the knowing mind. It is true that Kant does refer the external world to some thing incognizable in itself; but it must be remembered that this is not the same view which the physiologist teaches us about the origin of the sensations. The Thing-in-itself is rather the supersensible ground of the phenomenal world, and so Kant is careful to point out that the word cause is ambiguous. "The word *cause*, when applied to the supersensible, signifies merely the *ground* which determines the causality of things to an effect in accordance with the laws of nature; and while the possibility of causality in this sense cannot be understood, it can be conclusively shown that it is not self-contradictory, as some have maintained it to be."¹ The physical stimulus as conceived by the physiologist is something existing in space having a determinate relation to the sensibility; the Thing-in-itself on the contrary is not in space or time, and we have here Kant's own emphatic repudiation. 'It is' he says, "an altogether mistaken idea of the theory of sense-objects as mere phenomena,

¹ *The Philosophy of Kant*, selected by John Watson, p. 320.

to which we must add something non-sensuous, if one imagines, or tries to make others imagine, this to mean the supersensuous substratum of matter is divided into monads (or parts) as we divide matter itself; for in this case the monad (which is merely the idea of an unconditioned condition of the compound) would be regarded as in space; when it ceases to be a noumenon, and is itself compound."¹ We must therefore once for all give up the practice of reading the physiological theory of the origin of sense-impressions into the Kantian doctrine, and while talking of the raw material of sense-impressions in connection with the Kantian system, it should be remembered that these impressions are not the mechanical effects of the things-in-themselves on the animal sentience.

In spite of the warnings of the more sympathetic exponents, however, all the philosophers from Descartes to Kant are frequently thought to have committed themselves to the physiological view. In fact, the better aspect of their epistemological theories has been so much

¹ Quoted by Adamson, *Philosophy of Kant*, p. 78.

Adamson observes that "it is worth while noticing that all the conclusions from the physiology of the senses, which Lange regards as furnishing confirmation of the Kantian criticism lie entirely beyond and without its sphere."—p. 23.'

overshadowed by the physiological theory of the origin of sensations, which sometimes comes to prominence with more or less definiteness in their analysis of knowledge, that the major part of the criticism of their philosophical views is generally directed against the so-called productive theory of the sense-data. This, we are led to believe, is responsible for the widespread failure to appreciate the real nature of the contributions they made to the solution of one of the most important and far-reaching problems of philosophy.¹

In the light of the above explanation of the term *idea*, it may now be easy to appreciate the truth which the advocates of the "ideal system", notwithstanding their short-comings and even manifest inconsistencies, were seeking to express and thus preparing the ground for a truer type of idealism of a later age. The "*idea*", according to the better aspect of their theories, is not simply a psychical occurrence or a mode of consciousness produced by an external stimulus; it is rather the meaning, the content, or better still, things in so

The philosophical meaning of "*idea*"

¹Mr. R. M. Eaton's remarks may be cited here in illustration of the widespread failure:—"Cartesianism here rubs elbows with the idealism of Berkeley, who pursues Locke's way of ideas to its conclusion in affirming that ideas, and the spirits that produce them, are sole realities"—*Descartes*, p. xxix,

far as they are thought or contemplated by the mind. The scholastic distinction of the "formal reality" from the "objective reality" of the ideas, which Descartes adopts unhesitatingly is not then an unfortunate departure from the critical path of philosophy of which a modern idealist or realist should fight shy. The distinction, when properly understood, is a valuable achievement of critical thought in the sphere of knowledge. That Locke too, in spite of his scornful rejection of the suggestion that ideas could ever be seriously taken to be real substances, could not abandon the Cartesian distinction is rightly seen by Professor Gibson who, following Adamson, may well claim the credit of having done a greater justice to the new theory of ideas than what it had received at the hands of Green and others. In Locke's actual treatment of ideas, it is rightly remarked, "it is implied throughout that ideas possess both aspects, although they are not always equally prominent, and confusion is apt to result from the want of a clear definition of standpoint. The idea for him is at once the apprehension of a content and the content apprehended; it is both a psychological existent and a logical meaning,"¹

¹ Locke's *Theory of Knowledge*, p. 19.

We must now turn to the contributions which Berkeley made to the genuine type of idealism. These, we believe, are contained in his central formula, namely, that the *esse* of things is *percipi*, with its implication that things as objects are ideas. That "the *objects* of human knowledge" are "ideas", he starts by emphasising, "is evident to any one" who would like to take a survey of them. And it is significant that this admission does not prevent him from remarking: "That the colours are really in the tulip which I see is manifest. Neither can it be denied that this tulip may exist independent of your mind or mine;" he finds "an evident contradiction", not in the independent existence of the tulip, but only in the supposition that "any immediate object of the senses that is, any idea, or combination of ideas—should exist in an unthinking substance, or exterior to all minds."¹

It is needless to explain again what we have already made sufficiently clear. It is evident from these and many similar passages that Berkeley, despite his occasional confusion, meant by an idea, not a psychical event, but an object or a thing as it exists for the mind that perceives it. Mr. Laird then; we believe, is entirely right in so far as he remarks, in the article to

¹ Fraser's *Selections from Berkeley*, p. 147.

which we have already referred, that "if sensible things are in the mind *only* in the sense that they are the direct objects of mind, it would be hard to look for a fuller measure of agreement" between the theory of Berkeley and that of neo-realism, though these two theories are "widely separated in time and in form of expression." Again, Mr. Laird may find not only Berkeley but a good number of idealists following him closely when he explains the meaning of 'independence' as independence of "the object of a cognitive act" of that act, so that the object is "given to it and not made by it." No idealist who knows his business will, we believe, care for defending the position that the object of perception is created in the process of perception. It is, therefore, nothing more than an unfortunate confusion of thought when Mr. Laird, following the general misconception of the realists, proceeds elsewhere to remark that the main assumption of realism is that things can be known as they really are, and that "the object of true knowledge is in a certain sense independent of our knowing of it," while, on the other hand, all idealists, "inspite of their differences, dispute this independence of the objects of knowledge."¹

¹ *A Study in Realism*, p. 8.

The root-fallacy of contemporary realism, which it shares with Berkeley's idealism, as we have urged above, does not consist in its insistence on the independence of the objects as it conceives them, *i.e.*, as things which are not created in the act of knowledge; it rather lies in its failure to realise the function of thought in knowledge. And here Berkeley has at least the merit of seeing the defect of his earlier analysis. In *Siris*, therefore, he not only calls the objects of sense *phenomena*, instead of *ideas* or *sensations*, but goes on to make the well-known observation: "We know a thing when we understand it when we can interpret or tell what it signifies. Strictly, the sense knows nothing. We perceive indeed sounds by hearing, and characters by sight. But we are not therefore said to understand them. After the same manner, the phenomena of nature are alike visible to all: but all have not alike learned the connexion of natural things, or understand what they signify, or know how to vaticinate by them." ¹ The connection of natural things, as Berkeley sees here clearly, is not given through sense, and in this respect, we believe, Berkeley has a truer insight than the neo-realists, for, as we hope to prove at a later stage, the so-called

The superiority of Berkeley's position to that of neo-realism.

¹ Fraser's *Selections*, p. 296.

sensible things are not purely sense-given facts; they presuppose connections that are not themselves sense-given. Berkeley saw this clearly even in the *Principles* in so far as he insisted on the *order* of nature which he took to have been divinely established.

Problem
arising
out of the
distinction
between
content
and thing.

We have so far insisted on the real significance of the term *idea* as used by the advocates of the "ideal system", and have tried to show that there is an essential agreement between idealism and realism in respect of their theories on the status of the world in relation to the knowing mind. Here, however, arises a deeper problem which has been the source of a heated controversy since the time of Descartes. Granted that an idea is a thing as it exists for the mind; but thus, it has been frequently urged, does not tell us definitely what the status of the thing is when it *does not exist for the mind that knows it*. An idea as the content of knowledge, though it may be different from the act of knowledge, does not exist except for the mind; on the other hand, a thing for the realistic position does exist even when it does not exist for the mind. This is perhaps the most vital contrast between the two positions, and the controversy was started even in the Cartesian School with Malebranche on the one side, and Arnauld on the other. The contro-

versy has been revived in contemporary philosophy with renewed vigour and still remains as an undecided issue. The main question is whether the idea is not something like a *tertium quid* coming between the thing and the mind, possessing, as Mr. Alexander puts it aptly, a twilight existence between the things they represent and the mind which understands them. All idealists, it is widely supposed, must, in some form or other, accept the doctrine that the being of things is dependent on their being known, and so far Berkeley's is the only type of idealism.

That the so-called objective idealism has a common basis with the subjective idealism of Berkeley has been emphatically maintained even by such an accomplished thinker as A. Seth Pringle-Pattison. The fundamental argument on which Berkeley's idealism is based, it is said¹ "remains the same in those transcendental theories which endeavour to avoid the private or individualistic character of Berkeley's doctrine by bringing in an All-Knower to maintain in existence the world of objects which we recognize in common, and which we usually think of as existing quite irrespective of whether they are known or not known." Now, it must be candidly admitted that if we isolate some of the main conclusions of the doctrine

¹ *The Idea of God*, p. 191.

known as objective idealism, there seems to be ample justification for the remark that the transcendental idealism "is just Berkeleian idealism *in excelsis*"; and regarded in this light, the only difference between these two types of idealism seems to be that the one is simply the other universalised and applied on the cosmic scale. But, to think further that the reasoning is the same in both cases is, we submit, to do scanty justice to the transcendentalist's standpoint. On the contrary, all the idealists beginning with Kant onward have emphatically dissociated themselves from Berkeley; and when we come to Green, the language in which the difference is accentuated verges almost on the contemptuous. Moreover, Kant himself is a fairly clear example to prove that an idealist who repudiates Berkeleianism need not necessarily commit himself to a doctrine of the All-Knower; and so this doctrine, we contend, is not vitally connected with the repudiation of the private and individualistic character of Berkeley's philosophy even in those systems where the All-Knower figures prominently. For a more detailed proof of this contention, we may turn for a while to the philosophy of T. H. Green, one of the most prominent advocates of the All-Knower doctrine, whose influence on the subsequent history of idealism is admittedly great.

CHAPTER IV

The Philosophy of T. H. Green.

In view of the manifold aspects of Green's thoughts and the different types of criticism to which his philosophy has been subjected, it may conduce to clearness if we begin with an initial statement of those portions of his philosophy which are less open to misinterpretation, and then proceed to the more debatable aspects. As often happens in all controversial topics, the prejudice created by one aspect of a philosopher's thought has a tendency to prevent the critic from appreciating the profounder and more abiding truths expressed in the other portions. The more useful method of presenting his thought is, therefore, to keep aside all topics which may prejudice the reader's mind long before he has opportunities for respecting the philosopher's critical acuteness and candour. Now, the first thing which we should like to emphasise in Green's analysis of knowledge is his concessions to the realistic position. Lotze has somewhere remarked that the best interest of the idealist can be well

Green's
Conces-
sion to
Realism

served only when he begins his analysis as a realist. This is a remark which is perhaps nowhere more applicable than to Green's position. He begins with an emphatic repudiation of the doctrine that 'there is no such thing as matter,' or that 'the external world is merely the creation of our own minds.'¹ A true idealist, for Green, does not dispute the realist's belief that there is a real world quite independent of the fact that somebody happens to know it. Experience makes no difference to the real world. "It is quite true," he says, "that . . . the object-matters of our knowledge do not come into being with the experience which I or any one may happen to have of them"; we cannot "suppose consciousness with its world to come into existence over and over again as this man or that becomes conscious."² It is impossible to conceive how a greater concession can be given to the realistic position which rightly insists that knowledge presupposes, and does not create, its objects. Green too urges almost in the same language: "The object, for instance, may be known . . . as matter, but it is only so known in virtue of . . . a manifestation of

¹ *Works*, I, p. 386.

² *Ibid.*, p. 487.

itself”¹ The object is an object only “in virtue of the manifestation.” Hence matter and motion, for instance, exist there whether we know them or not; they are only manifested, not created, in being known.

It is clear from this unambiguously expressed opinion of Green that he fully recognised the truth of the realistic contention that knowledge reveals but does not construct its objects. “It is obvious that the facts of the world do not come into existence when this or that person becomes acquainted with them”²; and if Berkeley denied such an obvious fact, this was due to his false method of approaching experience which for him, as also for the sô-called empiricists in general, is nothing more than “a sequence of impressions, each qualified by residua of those which have preceded it.”³ But experience in the true sense of the term is “the connected consciousness of the world of facts”; and “it is for lack of” this distinction between these two senses of the term that “the controversy between ‘experimentalists’ and their opponents has described so tedious a circle, entanglement in which is the sure mark of a philosopher

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 337.

² *Prolegomena*, p. 38.

³ *Works*, I. p. 460.

who does not understand his business." In fact, Berkeley's early idealism "was merely a cruder form of Hume's." And unless "this doctrine was to efface 'spirit' as well as 'matter,' he must modify it by the admission of a 'thing' that was not an 'idea,' and of which the '*esse*' was *percipere* not *percipi*."¹

It need hardly be pointed out that so far there is absolutely no difference between the realist's attacks against Berkeley and those of the arch-idealist Green. Green at least would have no scruples in admitting with Alexander that the things do not "owe their *esse* to their *percipi*."² and that "just as the silver must exist before it can be used as a shilling and impressed with the king's effigy," so the thing must exist before it can be known by the mind. It is only when the idealist undertakes a further analysis of the process of knowledge that the divergence between realism and idealism emerges for the first time. Yet here, as we shall try to show below, much of the controversy is due to the use of ambiguous language and not to any essential difference in thought; and the idealistic analysis, we believe, can be so restated in terms of a realistic philosophy as

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

Space, Time and Deity, II, p. 95.

to mitigate in a considerable measure the contrast which is generally supposed to exist between idealism and realism. By this, however, we do not mean to suggest that there is absolutely no difference between the two historically opposed schools of thought, or that the history of the controversy between idealism and realism has been merely a history of how eminent thinkers have misunderstood each other. On the contrary, it will be our aim to throw into a clearer relief the fundamental difference of principles which perhaps cannot be solved to the satisfaction of both. But, we are persuaded to believe, the realist as a rule entertains something like a prejudice against any interpretation which professes to be idealistic, and so seeks to fight shy of everything that is uttered by the idealist in relation to the knowledge situation. The consequence is that their paths seem to diverge much earlier than they would have done if they had waited to try for a better understanding of each other. To this further analysis then we must now address ourselves.

The question, says Green, "which Hume bequeathed to such of his successors as could read him aright" may best be approached with the formula, 'How is knowledge possible?' When it is said in reply to the question that "we have been taught most of it, but that

The
Problem,
ignored
by
Realists.

ultimately, as our best psychologists teach, it results from the production of feeling in us by the external world and the registration of feeling in experience," then "it may seem strange to be told that no disciple of Kant or Hegel, who knows what he is about, would dispute the truth of the above answer, but only its sufficiency. The fact that there is a real external world of which through feeling we have a determinate experience, and that in this experience all our knowledge of nature is implicit, is one which no philosophy disputes. The idealist merely asks for a further analysis of a fact which he finds so far from simple."¹ It is not enough to say that "we know because something makes us know, for, the 'something' is determined as a 'world' as 'real,' and as 'external,' and as in some way reflecting itself in our experience." Hence to say that it is useless to explain the possibility of knowledge and then to take everything at 'its face-value' is, according to Green, to avoid the question of knowledge altogether. Whether we think of the world as being either a 'block universe' or as essentially a creative process, whether it be nothing better than the stage for the mad dance of electrons or a never-ceasing flux of chaotic

¹ *Works*, I, p. 376.

sense-data, whether it be a series of qualities emerging successively from the space-time matrix or simply the indeterminate and unforeseeable outburst of an *elan vital*, the question requiring an answer is—"What are the conditions implied in the existence of such an object?" Now, our first impulse in answer to this question is to say that it is, if we may so put it, a question-begging problem; for, it assumes the exact point at issue, namely, that there are certain conditions on which the existence of the things depends, whereas the realist's contention is that there is no such condition at all. The things are out there, self-existent and unconditioned, and so to raise an impossible question is to forfeit the right to an answer. But in reality the question cannot be thus summarily dismissed. For, even if it be granted that the things "had an existence in *themselves*, or otherwise than as related to a consciousness, it would still not be by *such* . . . (things, but by the things) which we know," that the possibility of existence has to be explained. "Nothing can be known by help of reference to the unknown."¹

The question, which of course is the old Kantian question, raised by Green requires a

Meaning
of
Phenomenon.

¹ *Prolegomena*, p. 13.

little explanation in view of the misinterpretations to which it is obviously open. It is evidently not the question whether the things are independent of the knowing mind; that they are so has been already admitted. But to grant that the things are independent of the persons who happen to know them is not to commit oneself to the admission that the things are absolutely unconditioned. An absolutely unconditioned thing would be just the Kantian thing-in-itself of which nothing can be said, and which therefore cannot be appealed to in explanation of anything. The physical stimulus that is supposed to cause the sensations, the space-time matrix, the *elan vital*, the law of gravitation, ether and electrons—none of these can be properly called a thing-in-itself, though all of them are surely independent existences, in the sense that they had existed even when nobody experienced them. In this sense all that we can ever know as existing is an idea or a phenomenon as distinct from what is not knowable at all. That is, though the things we know do not depend for their existence on the fact that somebody knows them, and so in this sense they are independent of the knowing mind, yet, all the determinations of the things are discovered only in the knowledge relation, so that the things which are referred to

in our explanations of the facts are necessarily determined in certain specific ways.

It is of course a different question whether the things are really determined in those ways in which we have so far determined them ; but this does not affect the truth of the assertion that we have to determine them in certain specific ways in so far as they are referred to in explaining facts. Thus, for instance, in explaining a sensation as the effect of the physical stimulus on the animal sentience, we have necessarily to determine the stimulus as a cause standing in a specific spatio-temporal relation to the animal, and apart from this determination it would be impossible to refer to the stimulus for explaining the sensation. Hence to insist that we can know only phenomena is not to degrade the things into mind-dependent appearances ; it is merely to indicate that things are what we know them to be. And we know them only by bringing them into relation to things other than themselves, and it follows consequently that to refer a fact to a thing-in-itself that cannot be determined in any way is to admit that the fact cannot be explained at all. This explains the repeated warnings of Green that we should not confuse the assertion that things are independent of the knower's experience at a particular time

with the other assertion that things are external to consciousness.

Otherness
and
Exter-
nality.

With this explanation of the idealistic common-place that all we can ever know is an idea or a phenomenon, we must return once more to Green's statement of the difference between idealism and realism. Commonsense, he points out, is "rightly persuaded that real things are other than any feelings of ours or any judgments we may form about them¹"; it is further true in holding that "the world which we know" is surely not "one which begins and ends with the birth and death of individual man."² So far the realist's belief is never questioned by true idealism. The real difference between realism and idealism consists in this that while the former identifies 'otherness' with 'externality,' the latter insists on their difference. This is perhaps the clearest as well as the briefest expression of Green's opinion on the vital question of realism *versus* idealism; but unfortunately it has been thrown into the background in contemporary controversy, and then realism busies itself with exposing the fallacy of what is never accepted by a true idealist, and idealism exerts itself to defend what cannot survive the realist's re-

¹ *Works, I, p. 498.*

² *Works, II, p. 183.*

peated attacks. But nothing can be gained by such irrelevant disputes, and to philosophise would be to undertake a wild-goose chase when abundant dialectical weapons are arrayed on both sides over something that is not in dispute. Let us then try to see how far the idealistic distinction between otherness and externality is valid.

A thing, it is pointed out, may be external to another thing, but nothing can be external to consciousness; or, as it is also sometimes put, externality is one of the relations whereby consciousness connects its objects and so nothing can be external to consciousness. Such expressions are found in abundance in the writings of Green; and if not rightly interpreted, they seem to be in flagrant contradiction with his other expressions that the world of objects is independent of the individual experience and that the objective things are not affected by the birth and death of individual man. But these two sets of expressions, Green suggests, are not difficult of reconciliation. We must quote at this place, in view of the misunderstanding to which Green's arguments are liable, the entire passage in which he puts his position briefly. "An object, in fact, is always a relation, or congeries of relations, and consciousness is the only medium in which relations exist for us.

An apparent contradiction.

Whether they can exist otherwise is as idle a question as whether plants could grow without an atmosphere. It is quite true that the relations which form the object-matter of our knowledge do not come into being with the experience which I or any one may happen to have of them, but on the other hand, except as relations of what is relative to consciousness, they are simply nothing ; nor unless we suppose consciousness with its world to come into existence over and over again as this man or that becomes conscious, is there any difficulty in reconciling these two propositions. We are apt to speak of the world as reflecting itself in the mirror of consciousness, and the metaphor misleads us into imagining an existence of the world, apart from the reflection. We forget that while the mirrored object is related to our senses in many other ways than through its reflection in the mirror, it is only through consciousness that the world exists for us at all. Even the 'thing-in-itself,' on examination, turns out to be simply a name for the unity of relation subsisting between all objects as a result of their being taken into the unity of consciousness ; in other words, of their becoming objects."¹

¹ *Works I., p. 487.*

This passage may be interpreted in two different ways. Of these the more obvious interpretation is that an object, according to Green, is essentially related to consciousness and so has no existence or reduces itself to nothing when it is not related to consciousness. Consciousness, therefore, and the object are organically related with each other. As Green himself observes: "I do not admit that the relation of object to subject is truly described by saying that the object or non-ego is independent of, or external to, the subject or ego. I hold that the object has no real existence apart from the subject any more than the subject apart from the object."¹ It is added in another context that, according to his doctrine, the external matter of the exact sciences is "unaffected," "except that 'externality' has to be understood as of *matter to matter*, not of matter to thought, 'matter' and 'externality' alike meaning certain relations which thought constitutes."² And so though it is true that "the whole system of nature" is something other than thought," yet, "relation to thought makes it what it is," and consequently, "but for thought it would not be."

If, however, this has to be regarded as the right interpretation of Green's ultimate position,

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 522.

² *Works II.*, p. 181.

then the realistic tendencies of his writings must necessarily be condemned as nothing more than a half-hearted concession to the common-sense view-point. We suppose, however, that Green was not really half-hearted, though his expressions are not always felicitous. Except on this supposition, one must admit that Green was concealing a difficulty which he saw but could not solve; but in that case, we believe, he would not have made a deliberate attempt to reconcile his view with the common-sense standpoint.

What then is the true position of Green in respect of the realistic belief in an independent world of things? He is emphatic on one point; and it is this that the "universe" is not "the creation of my own mind"; this is impossible, for, "I only began to think twenty-five years ago";¹ and so it would be absurd to suppose that the universe comes into being "with the experience which I or any one may happen to have" of it. But, Green contends, it does not follow from this that the universe has a *meaning* except when it is within someone's experience. A universe that does not reveal itself to our thought, or which has no possibility of revealing itself in our experience, is only the unknowable thing-in-itself which is

¹ *Loc. cit.*

ultimately a contradiction in terms. But there is much in the universe which is yet unknown and unrevealed ; from this it does not follow that it does not exist, though it does follow that its existence has no meaning *for us*. Hence, as Green points out, "consciousness is the only medium" in which the universe exists *for us*. As plants cannot grow without an atmosphere, so the universe, except as revealed in, or related to, consciousness, reduces itself to a mere "nothing"; "it is only through consciousness that the world exists for us at all," though, of course, it is not "created by us."

Green's entire merit, we submit, consists in thus reconciling the essential position of idealism with realism, though his language, as we have admitted, admits of two conflicting interpretations ; and we may perhaps go further and admit that Green has sometimes argued, forgetting the other side of his position, that the universe does not exist at all when it is "outside the thinking consciousness." And in so far as he does so, he makes himself liable to the fallacy of ego-centric predicament. But a sympathetic view of a metaphysical position should not emphasise the slips of language and thought, and then it will be clear that what Green *means* to convey to his readers is that though the object-matters of our knowledge are

Green
tried to
mediate
between
idealism
and
realism

not so dependent on our experience that they must come into being and vanish into non-existence with the experience and non-experience respectively of them by us; yet, "it is only through consciousness that the world exists for us at all"; and even if the question "whether the consciousness has anything to do with the establishment of the relations in which it conceives reality to consist . . . is answered in the negative, there will still be an important sense in which understanding . . . may be said to be the principle of objectivity."¹ For it is through understanding or consciousness "that there is *for us* an objective world; through it we *conceive* an order of nature, with the unity of which we must reconcile our interpretations of phenomena, if they are to be other than 'subjective' illusions." It is true that there are many things as yet unknown to us, and even our scientific knowledge of a tiny flower is merely a "fragment of the real nature" of the flower. Yet, "Facts related to those of which the percipient is aware in the object, but not yet known to him, can only be held to belong to the perceived object potentially or in some anticipatory sense, in so far as upon a certain development of intelligence, in a direc-

¹ *Prolegomena*, p. 18.

tion which it does not rest with the will of the individual to follow or no, they will become incorporated with it.¹

If we restate Green's position in language more acceptable to the realistic attitude of mind, it will come to something like the following. The things exist there independent of our knowledge of them; or, the things antedate and postdate knowledge. But the things are revealed to us, not while we gaze passively at the world; revelation presupposes, on the contrary, a function of thought, which interprets the cruder knowledge of sense further and further, and makes the world reveal itself to us. Thus the real world is in the process of being communicated to us. Through the different sciences of physics and chemistry, psychology and anthropology, we are trying to understand the world in its diverse aspects. So the world could not exist for us, it could not reveal itself to us, if we had no interpreting thought. Knowledge is the medium through which alone the Reality expresses itself. It also follows from this that nothing can have any meaning for us which is not statable in terms of knowledge. When, for instance, we speak of matter as affecting the

Green's
position
restated.

¹ *Prolegomena*, p. 73,

mind and producing therein certain sensations, we have to determine that matter in certain ways, otherwise the term matter reduces itself to a nonsensical sound only. Take away from our conception of matter all the different determinations under which it is thought, and matter reduces itself to nothing for us. In this sense then the world is sustained by knowledge or consciousness. The apparent absurdity of the position disappears if we remember that we are always speaking of the *known* world in this context.

An
interpretation
of
the
subject-object
relation.

This again is the meaning of the idealistic phrase that the subject-object relation is universal. This phrase, we think, need not mean that the world cannot exist without an All-Knower or a Universal Subject as has been often supposed; and a philosopher who would leave the question of the Universal Subject as a problem open to debate, as Green suggests in the passage quoted above, could still see the necessity of the position under consideration. For the moment we refuse to be satisfied with the vague belief that the world somehow or other exists there, and raise the question, how the world is *known* to us as a world at all with its distinctions between matter and mind, reality and illusion, our answers will be always in terms of those determinations

which imply the subject-object relation. As thus interpreted, there does not seem to be any essential difference between the traditional idealist and those critics of idealism who, in spite of the admission of the perfect rationality of the universe, hasten to distinguish their doctrine from what they think to be the doctrine of idealism proper. "The true meaning," E. Caird points out, "of the reflexion that objects exist only for a subject is, not that objects are reducible to the sensations through which we know them, but that we know no objects except those which are relative to a self, which therefore require to be contemplated in that relation in order that their true nature may be seen."¹ In fact, when we get rid of the false notion that to admit the necessity of a self is to reduce the object to the position of a mind-dependent sensation, the universality of the subject-object relation, which is generally supposed to be a peculiarly idealistic tenet, will be taken as the basis of every true philosophy, whether realistic or idealistic. The paths of the realist will of course diverge in the long run from that of the idealist, but not at such an early stage of the journey.

¹ *The Critical Philosophy*, I. p. 420.

The Ego-
Centric
Predica-
ment.

This is perhaps the right place to consider another widespread misapprehension which afflicts even some of the best thinkers of our time. Professor R. B. Perry has been credited with the genius of Kant for having invented the phrase ego-centric predicament to indicate the basic fallacy of the idealistic position, in so far as it depends for its validity on the impossibility of conceiving things unconceived. Berkeley, for instance, insists in the Dialogue that he is content to put the whole of his position on one single issue. "If you can conceive it possible for any mixture or combination of qualities, or any sensible object whatever, to exist without the mind, then I will grant it actually to be so." But as it is a contradiction to talk of *conceiving* a thing which is *unconceived*, and that which is conceived must necessarily be in the mind, it is impossible to conceive, say, a house or a tree existing independent and out of all minds whatsoever. This, as the realist has no difficulty in pointing out, is simply the ego-centric predicament. "Granted that whatever we find to exist is an object which we perceive or think, does it follow that those objects cannot exist except in relation to perceiving or thinking . . . ?"¹

¹ Prof. Hoernlé, *Idealism*, p. 92. Prof. Perry's own criticism is given in his *Present Philosophical Tendencies*, chapter vi.

Similarly, Prof. Pringle-Pattison thinks that this mentalistic doctrine of Berkeley is essentially circular, for all that Berkeley can prove by this argument is that the things "cannot exist *in the knowledge relation* without implying a mind or ego, and also that we cannot say anything about them except as known, so that out of that relation they are to us, in a Kantian phrase, as good as nothing at all. But this method of approach cannot possibly prove that they do not exist out of that relation; it cannot prove Berkeley's thesis that being-in-that-relation constitutes their existence. On the contrary, we should all say, *prima facie*, that being known makes no difference to the existence of anything real." This mentalistic argument, Prof. Pringle-Pattison urges, underlies the All-Knower doctrine which is also suggested by Berkeley himself, "But *if knowledge has the same meaning in the two cases*, the existence of a thing can no more depend on God's knowing it than on my knowing it."¹

Here perhaps we come upon one of the instances in which the saying is true that the philosophers are notorious for meaning what they do not say and saying what they do

Its real
meaning.

¹ *The Idea of God*, p. 192.

not mean. Because, when rightly interpreted, there does not seem to be any essential difference between the meanings of the mentalists and their critics. The mentalist, at least of the transcendental variety, would have, so far as we can see, no hesitation in accepting Prof. Pringle-Pattison as one of the clearest exponents of his argument; for, it does not purport to prove anything more than that we cannot say 'anything about the things "except as known," "so that out of that relation they are as good as nothing at all"; which, therefore, as Caird says in the passage already quoted, "require to be contemplated in that relation in order that their true nature may be seen." The things no doubt exist whether they are in the knowledge relation or not, but their true nature can be discovered only in that relation, otherwise they are as good as nothing for us. Hence, rightly understood, the ego-centric predicament can be denied, not by the realist who accepts the existence of determinate things in the world, but by the agnostic for whom the real things are never known, because they are either determined in different ways from those in which they are determined in the knowledge relation, or they are not at all determined in themselves; but as to know is

to determine, the things-in-themselves can never be known. Nothing less than absolute scepticism about the efficiency of knowledge is implied in any theory that seeks to escape from the ego-centric predicament; and so, we confess, it has always been a matter of great surprise to us how this could possibly be accepted by a number of accomplished thinkers as a peculiar fallacy of the idealistic position alone.

There is no doubt a ring of absurdity about the assertion that the things cannot exist except in relation to the self; but it is no less absurd to think that any serious thinker could have meant by this that they can exist *only while* a mind, either finite or infinite, knows them. That the understanding is the principle of objectivity, as Green sees clearly, remains true "whether the consciousness has anything to do with the establishment of the relations in which it conceives reality to consist" or not, and so the truth of that doctrine is not essentially connected with the truth of the theory of the Universal Ego. Berkeley's thesis then that 'being-in-that-relation constitutes their existence' can only mean that 'being-in-that-relation constitutes their only intelligible existence. Or, as Green again puts it, the external world is 'other' than any feelings of ours or any judgments we may form about them, but they

cannot be 'external' to consciousness; to think so is to mistranslate otherness into externality. This again is essentially the Kantian position that the possibility of experience is the supreme principle by reference to which alone the objective validity of the categories can be proved, and that whatever lies beyond experience is only the thing-in-itself that cannot be determined by any of the categories.

A wide-spread misunderstanding of Green.

We may now incidentally see, in the light of these considerations, the real meaning of Green's assertion, repeated with tiresome uniformity, that it is the relations which constitute objectivity, or, as it is sometimes put more extremely, the objects are mere congeries of relations. What it really means is that nothing can be known as an object which is void of all determinations; that is, if we drop all determinations from the notion of an object, it reduces itself to something which is as good as nothing for us. "The first step in knowledge is to connect one appearance with another, as forming one object or apparent thing; to identify appearances. This is done by instituting relations between them—relations which doubtless really exist, but which for us as sentient are not—and this is to condition them. The next step is to connect objects thus formed, in other words to condition, by mutual rela-

tions, the conditions of the first appearances. All knowledge is a continuation of this process. To think is to condition, and to condition is to think."¹ The mediating thought, that is, by connecting one appearance with another, makes knowledge definite, and this would be impossible for a creature that has only sentience and no thought. For a purely sentient creature, the world with its definitely determined things, with its distinctions between things and things, illusions and reality, the hallucinatory and the veridical, could not exist. Hence "thought, as consciousness of determination by relations, is necessary to constitute the object of intuition."² Two points need be noted here. On the one hand, Green insists that to know an object is to relate it to something else, both of which receive mutual determination through that relation, so that one cannot be fully understood except with reference to the other. Every object has many such determinations which constitute its reality; and conversely, the purely undetermined object is as good as nothing for us.

The second point of Green's contention is that everything has a nature of its own which

¹ *Works*, II, p. 289,

² *Ibid.*, p. 171.

is gradually revealed to us through these progressive determinations, within the 'knowledge relation'; as our knowledge grows, the real thing manifests itself to us more and more. That is, though the things out of the knowledge relation exist as completely determined, our knowledge develops from the less determined to the more determined; consequently, though it is true that we are always in direct contact with the real things, yet there is a process of communication which makes our knowledge only potentially real at a particular stage. From this standpoint, Green says that "the objects are thus real, but only in themselves; for the subject learning to know they are so only potentially not actually. For him the beginning of knowledge is merely, 'there is something,' in other words, his first idea is of 'mere being'; this 'something' gradually becomes further qualified,"¹ and so on. This being the process of gradual revelation of the object to us, thought is the essential medium through which the things are to be known.

This analysis of the knowledge process, so profound and suggestive has been attacked mainly from two standpoints. First, one of

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

the most reiterated criticisms against Green is that he seeks in vain to reconstruct the living concrete reality by means of a system of abstract relations. It is needless to delineate all the endless variety of forms in which this criticism has appeared, and it would be unprofitable as well as unnecessary to reproduce the whole controversy at this place. What is, however, clear from our discussion so far is that the so-called 'living concrete reality' is neither denied nor under-estimated in this analysis. If by the concrete reality is meant our feelings and passions, desires and aversions, they are certainly real ; but, as Green himself is careful to point out, "We must always bear in mind that when certain writers speak of the 'unreality of mere feeling,' they mean feeling as it would be for a merely feeling consciousness."¹ That is, though the feeling can be felt by the merely feeling consciousness, if such a mind exists at all, it could not refer the feeling to its real conditions and thus know it in its actual reality. There is of course a kind of reality in the feeling as *felt*, but to know it scientifically is to refer it to its cause or its effect, and thus to make our knowledge concrete by referring the feeling to those conditions

¹ *Works, II., p. 177.*

under which alone it really exists. In this sense, the most intense feeling may give us the meagrest knowledge, in so far as the conditions under which alone it really exists are not known. The feeling, like every other event of the world, has its own conditions ; and as the knowledge of the physical world advances through the determination of the physical events according to certain relations, and as through such determinations the events are revealed to us ; so here, the felt feeling reveals its nature through the interpreting function of thought which refers it to its conditions. Regarded in this light, the feeling does not become less concrete by being reconstructed through relations ; it is rather the relations which invest the feeling as merely felt with that concreteness which belongs to it as an existent fact. It is true that the feeling can be felt even when we know very few of the relations in which it really stands ; for instance, " I may be acquainted with my tooth-ache and this knowledge may be as complete as knowledge by acquaintance ever can be . . . without knowing its ' nature.' "¹ But is it possible to deny that my tooth-ache has a nature on account of which it is different

¹ Mr. B. Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, p. 226.

from other things in the world ? To be merely acquainted is to know very little about the thing, and the dentist's knowledge of my tooth-ache, however indirect, is much fuller and hence more concrete than my knowledge of it by acquaintance. If my tooth-ache had no real 'nature' which is known only to the dentist, it would be absolutely extravagant on my part to pay him for the cure.

The fact then seems to be that when Green says that mere sensation or mere feeling "is in truth a phrase that represents no reality," he does not mean to resolve the feeling into a complex of thought-relations. The 'unreality of mere feeling,' as he himself sees, means only that a feeling "as it would be for a merely feeling consciousness" gives no real knowledge of those conditions under which alone it exists as a real fact. It is the scientific knowledge alone which, by referring the feeling to its conditions, gives us its real nature. So knowledge in the form of feeling has been always distinguished from intellectual knowledge proper,¹ and Green in minimizing the reality of feeling need not mean anything more than this that feeling cannot give us a knowledge of the world as an interrelated whole.

¹ See, for instance, Bosanquet's *Essentials of Logic*, p. 22.

Our con-
clusion

The result then which we arrive at under the guidance of Green may be summarised as follows. There is a real world of things which we do not create but discover through experience. This experience, however, does not exist while we passively receive the sense-data. It implies the interpreting function of thought through which that which would otherwise be a mere play of unrecognisable throng of sense-data on our animal sentience receives articulation, and in this sense thought is the real revealer of the world to us. The world could not be revealed if we had only felt and not also thought. Now, the further point which we shall try to establish is that the function of thought involves certain ideals that are organic to our intelligence, so every intellectual interpretation presupposes the reality of those ideals which cannot be separated from the reality of the world. But before we proceed to the elucidation of this further point, it may be useful to show, by reference to some of the recent philosophical doctrines, that Green's concessions to realism are by no means peculiar to his position alone. Every thinker, howsoever idealistic in the long run, accepts the realistic contention as essentially valid. To this then we turn in the next chapter, which will incidentally throw light on some other controversial topics of the present day.

CHAPTER V

Knowledge and Reality.

In the last chapter we have raised the problem of subject-object relation and have indicated the impossibility of escaping from the ego-centric predicament, rightly understood. We have further seen that the ego-centric predicament by itself does not decide the issue between idealism and realism, and that the absolutist arguments in support of the doctrine of an All-Knower are not organically connected with those which go to prove the inseparability of the subject and the object implied in all knowledge and experience. Nothing is, however, farther from our thought than the suggestion that these two types of arguments are never mixed up in the writings of the absolutists. On the contrary, we believe that they always tend to run into each other in their works, and it is this which is largely responsible for the halting appreciation they have generally received at the hands of those who are realistically inclined in their attitude to the common facts of life. All that we claim to

Two
types
of argu-
ments in
absolu-
tism.

have shown is that certain tendencies are not wanting in the most thorough-going monists of our time to dissociate these arguments from each other, and so it is not at all necessary for one who sees the universality of the subject-object relation to accept also the doctrine of the All-Knower. And historically, there have been philosophers who accept the duality, as distinct from dualism, of experience without rejecting their pluralistic beliefs. Now, in view of the importance of this relation, it is necessary to consider some of the attempts at restating the cognitive relation and the discussions it has given rise to. This will indicate on the one hand that the realistic contentions cannot be, and in fact have not been, disputed by the true idealists; and on the other hand it will incidentally clear up the real issues that divide idealism from realism.

According to our interpretation of the subject-object relation, as developed in the last chapter, the things, though they cannot be known except in the knowledge relation, are independent of the fact that somebody knows them, and in this sense they are independent of experience. To many, this may appear as amounting to the rejection of the idealistic standpoint altogether, for, it may be thought, if there is anything that forms the contral

core of idealism, it is this that nothing exists independent of experience. Now, we have already seen that Green's thoughts are not entirely opposed to this conclusion of ours. But the same conclusion may be further confirmed by the doctrines of the eminent idealists of a more recent age. And as Bosanquet and Bradley are the two idealists who have exercised a decisive influence on the contemporary tendencies of thought, we must turn for a moment to their systems.

As in the case of Green, so here, again, we may start with a statement of the realistic concessions of Bosanquet and Bradley. Bosanquet welcomes Dr. Moore's view that "the Idealist is in the wrong if he maintains that particular things in space are in themselves altogether different from what they look like to us;" and he thinks that this realistic contention has never been denied by Plato and Hegel, or by T. H. Green, Nettleship and Bradley. "*You* do not make the world;" it is emphatically urged, "*it* communicates your nature to you, though in receiving this you are an active organ of the world itself."¹ Absolutism, he further remarks, has a decisive agreement with neo-realism over against the neo-idealism of

Abso-
lutism and
realism.

¹ *Contemporary Philosophy*, p. 3.

Croce and Gentile, in so far as "Nature in its concreteness and beauty", for neo-realism and absolutism alike, "is real, and is real, as we know and value it, and is not created by our thinking."¹ It is, again, observed in another context: "When I use the word 'red' I do not refer to or mean my idea of red considered as my idea, though I do mean red as I understand it by help of my idea. When I use the word, I mean a colour, a quality of surface, or at least of light, which I represent to myself by help of one or more reds which I have seen, but which I think of as not dependent either for being or for quality on my happening to know it."² Similarly, "the sun means the sun; and whatever that may be, it is not anything *merely* in my mind, . . . not a psychical fact in my individual history,"³

[The defect of neo-realism then, according to Bosanquet, does not consist in its insistence on the independent nature of the physical facts of the fact that somebody knows it. The real defect of the neo-realistic analysis of knowledge is rather to be found in its failure to realise that

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

² *Logic*, I., p. 17.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

"the things of normal apprehension cannot be regarded as self-contained existents composed within themselves of the qualities which we find belonging to them."¹ Here absolutism is in relative agreement with critical realism, and so ~~for~~^{for} parts company with neo realism; and the critical realist is, therefore, in the right when he urges, over against the neo-realist, that the group of qualities, if separated "from the context of percipients and of other things", would be "a mass of contradictions—of inconsistent magnitudes, figures, colours, temperatures, and the like." But thought cannot accept the perceived things to be ultimately real in so far as they are riddled with contradictions; consequently, the things as viewed by the neo-realist, cannot supply, as the critical realist rightly points out, "the physical objects demanded by science as the members of an existent world."

(On the other hand, the defect of critical realism consists, not in its insistence on the independent existence of the object as it conceives it, but in its supposition that the "content," or "essences," or "quality group," can never and in no degree be identified with the existent or the physical object. The object, according

¹ *Contemporary Philosophy*, p. 129.

to this doctrine, is "a mere existent, a bare 'that' which though sole object of thought, presents to thought no features that can be thought about."¹ "This, then," it is concluded, "the absolute severance of truth and reality as opposed to their relative identity, is the point of divergence between Critical Realism and Absolutism."²

Bosanquet's position so far, we believe, is quite clear and needs no comment. He is in fact in complete agreement with our contentions as developed in the last chapter. The world of knowledge, for him, is independent of the event of knowing. The contentions of the neo-realist as well as of the critical realist are true in so far as they insist on the independence of the world of the fact that I happen to know it. But the former goes wrong when he, not content with the assertion that the world is independent of knowledge, proceeds further to describe the things as atomic existences full of contradictory qualities; similarly, the latter is in the wrong when he sunders the 'what' entirely from the 'that', and fails to see that whatever is real must reveal itself in knowledge, though it is not created in the process of knowledge.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

² *Ibid.*, p. 137.

It is only the thing-in-itself that cannot be revealed, and it cannot be revealed because it contradicts itself and so cannot be even thought to be anything. But the things cannot be in their ultimate nature unthinkable; on the contrary, they are what thought comes to affirm them to be. As Bosanquet himself remarks, Reality "may be defined as the object affirmed by thought."¹ On the other hand, thought may be described as essentially "an effort to define the universe by meanings adequately conditioned; to reconstruct the unity of the real in ideal or discursive form."²

Our difficulty in following Bosanquet, however, begins when he, not content with observing that thought is the medium in which Reality reveals itself, goes further to emphasise that self-revelation is "essential and inherent in the real, whose nature apart from it is self-contradictory."³ This, in plain language, seems to mean that the real world cannot exist at all if it is not thought of or known, though not by my mind or your mind, yet by *a* mind. Here obviously we are back to Berkeley, and then objective idealism

The mentalistic tendency in idealism

¹ *Contemporary Philosophy*, p. 51.

² *Implication and Linear Inference*, p. 149.

³ *Logic*, II. p. 307.

becomes essentially Berkeleian idealism *in excelsis*. It is, however, one thing to insist that things are what we come to know them to be, and so they have no meaning that is not statable in terms of knowledge; but it is an entirely different matter when it is contended that things cannot exist at all when they are not within knowledge, or when they do not exist for a self. We need not multiply quotations to show that Bosanquet is anxious to maintain both these positions. And in so far as he does it, his insight, we are inclined to believe, is distinctly less tenable than that of Green who clearly sees that thought is the principle of objectivity, and that this remains true whether or not the consciousness has anything to do with the establishment of the relations in which it conceives reality to consist.

In fact, the revelatory character of knowledge loses all its meaning if knowledge itself be a part of what is revealed. It is true that "the universe is undoubtedly the object of apprehension and knowledge prior to them and determining them." But it does not follow from this that the universe cannot be "complete as a whole apart from apprehension, still less, of course, from experience."¹

¹ *Logic*, II. p. 313.

Far less does it follow that "the mind is a constituent of a living and self-determining real." But we need not press the point further in the present context, beyond remarking that revelation necessarily implies something which is revealed as well as something to which it is revealed, and so it becomes unintelligible in proportion to the obliteration of their distinction.

We may stop here to consider a difficulty in our position as so far defined. Is it possible, it may be asked, to separate existence from meaning? If the independent world has a meaning only in so far as it exists for the mind, then it appears to follow that the world when existing apart from the mind reduced itself to an unmeaning thing-in-itself. To put it in another form, if it is admitted that the world has no meaning except within knowledge, or except as it exists for a self, should it not be further admitted that it must always exist for a self on pain of being reduced to a thing-in-itself? Most of the idealists would perhaps reply in the affirmative. * And it is just here that we fail to follow them. An unmeaning existence, we reply, is an existence that has not yet been realised in knowledge; whereas the 'thing-in-itself' is not unmeaning in this sense. The latter, as we

Ambiguity in the term 'unmeaning'

have already explained, is unknowable and unthinkable, because it is indeterminable. That which is *ex hypothesi* out of all relations to things other than itself, would be a mere being which is equal to nothing. On the other hand, an unmeaning existence is nothing indeterminable, only we do not know how it is determined, and so have no notion of the way in which it exists.

Prof.
Joachim
on the
meaning
of inde-
pendence.

Our position, it is hoped, will gain in authority as well as clearness if we make a brief reference to the view of a thinker who is justly respected all over the world as one of the profoundest idealists of our time, and whose explicit assertions seem to go against our contention. Mr. Harold H. Joachim, in his monumental work, seems to have subjected the realistic belief to a very searching and damaging criticism. The whole of the second chapter of "The Nature of Truth" is apparently devoted to the refutation of the assumption that experiencing makes no difference to the facts, which is sometimes taken to be "the fundamental postulate of all Logic," and with the refutation of this assumption is also refuted the realistic belief in independent entities. But, we believe, Mr. Joachim's arguments, rightly interpreted, do not contradict our conclusion. On the contrary, it is made all the more clear in consequence

of his criticism of the false notions of independence. "We do not make or alter truth by our thinking," he admits, "any more than we make or alter goodness by our conduct, or beauty by our love or by our artistic endeavours. Truth is discovered, and not invented; and its nature is unaffected by the time and process of discovery and careless of the personality of the discoverer. It is to this independent entity that the judgment of this or that person must conform if *he* is to attain truth. Correspondence of *his* thinking with this 'reality' is truth *for him*."¹ This may rightly be regarded as the fundamental postulate of all Logic; but this account of the reality, as is pointed out further, represents only one side of the matter, and it will lead to confusion in the long run if it is not also remembered that "truth is actual as true thinking, goodness lives in the volitions and actions of men, and beauty has its being in the love of its worshippers and the creative activity of the artist. Truth, goodness, and beauty, in short, appear in the actual world and exist in finite experience . . . Doubtless it is irrelevant to the nature of truth whether *I* know it or *you*. Truth is independent of the process by which *I* come to know it, and

¹ *The Nature of Truth*, p. 20,

is unaffected by the time at which I know it. But yet this independent truth itself, whose nature holds aloof from the conditions of its 'existence for me' . . . lives and has its being in the judgments of finite minds." So far, if we understand Mr. Joachim's contentions aright, there is nothing incorrect in the description of the conditions under which I claim truth for my judgment. "But the 'correspondence-notion' attempts to render this description more precise by offering a definite theory as to *the nature of the test* which my judgment must satisfy if it is to be true."¹ And so all the difficulties of the theory of correspondence arise, not from its definition of truth but from the test it offers.

It is not necessary for our present purpose to explain in detail the coherence theory of truth; the only point of interest for us in Mr. Joachim's position is that he, on the one hand, has nothing to say against the independence of truth which we discover and do not create. And, on the other hand, he justly urges that the independent truth remains as good as nothing for us till it exists in our experience, and interpreted in terms of our knowledge. It is true that Prof. Joachim insists here more on the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

independence of truth than on that of reality; but his discussion, we believe, is invaluable for clearing up the meaning of independence, even when we are thinking, not of the independent truth, but of reality. Moreover, truth, as Bosanquet rightly remarks, has no meaning unless it is reality and unless it is in the form of ideas.¹

In the light of this explanation, it may now be easy to understand the real meaning and force of the arguments directed against the position that experiencing makes no difference to the facts. This assumption would be perfectly harmless if it had meant only that the facts are independent of our experience. But it is generally associated with a particular theory according to which knowledge consists in the perception of agreement or disagreement between two factors, one of which is within experience and the other without experience. As thus taken, all the perplexities involved in the theory of representative perception, as pointed out by the philosophers from Berkeley onward remain unsolved. And no philosopher, we believe, can successfully answer the charge brought against the representative theory by Berkeley, namely, that we cannot compare the portrait with the original

The
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¹ *Implication*, p. 148,

when the latter is *ex hypothesi* always outside experience. Hence it is futile to defend the correspondence theory which must in some form or other appeal to the facts outside experience for the perception of the correspondence. In fact, the main arguments of the idealists have been always directed against this false theory of correspondence that implies a reference to what is supposed to be external to experience in the sense that it can never be within experience, and which therefore, as Mr. Joachim puts it, "may be anything you please"; for, as it is supposed to be beyond all possibility of experience "it remains beyond all and any knowledge, and is a mere name for nothing," it is even beyond the possibility of refutation.

It, however, seems extremely incredible that any thinker, with Berkeley's remarks staring in his face, can seriously accept the correspondence theory in the sense in which Descartes and Locke defended it. But it is questionable how far the theory can be so reformulated as to avoid all reference to the unknown and the unknowable, in so far as it is offered as a theory about the nature of the test which true knowledge must satisfy. The reason however why the idealistic analysis of the knowledge situation has not met with universal acceptance

is perhaps to be found in the false apprehension that the admission of the universality of the subject-object relation must go together with the reduction of the entire world of reality to purely mind-dependent ideas. But, as we have already tried to make tolerably clear, when it is insisted that all things are within the knowledge relation, and, as such, implies a subject, the implication is not that the things do not exist when nobody knows them; it only means that the manner in which they exist, and the relations that obtain among them, would be nothing *for us* if they were different from what are realized or realizable in the knowledge relation. Indeed to admit that the things outside the subject-object relation are different from what they are within that relation, or that they have conditions of existence unrealizable in the knowledge relation would be to contradict oneself; for, the difference could be known only in so far as both the terms of difference are within experience. So nothing is gained by reference to the unknowable. Moreover, the admission of an intrinsic difference between the things as they are known and as they are in themselves must ultimately lead one to a state of despair of knowledge and reasoning; for, the concepts we use in describing the things must possess on the one hand definite meanings;

and on the other hand these meanings must have objective reference. This however does not exclude the possibility of changes in the meanings of the concepts under the stress of progressive analysis ; what it implies is that the concepts must have determinate meanings even when knowledge is adequate, and so the determinateness in the concepts involved in perfect knowledge is just the determinateness of the real world that expresses itself through the concepts. When the meanings are changed, it is not simply a question of arbitrary definition in what direction the changes should be made. The changes are always dictated by the world which we endeavour to know.

Things
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knowable
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known.

There seems to be, however, another reason why the idealistic analysis of the knowledge situation is not acceptable even to many accomplished thinkers of rare merit. As we have admitted above, the idealist's expressions admit of two different interpretations, On the one hand, he takes infinite pains to confirm the ordinary realistic thesis that the things are independent of the fact that a mind experiences them. On the other hand, he also seems to suggest that they can exist only while they are experienced by a subject, either finite or infinite. To avoid misunderstanding, it is, however, necessary to distinguish clearly

between the assertion that things are knowable and that things exist only while they are known. Agnosticism is necessarily involved in the denial of the former assertion ; but one may deny the latter as well as agnosticism as equally false. It is true that nothing can be said about a thing except in terms of thought or experience, but this fact by itself does not prove that the thing exists only while there is a subject to experience it ; all that it does prove is that the thing outside experience must have those characteristics that it is found to possess within experience, or that the thing reveals its real nature within experience, and this is but the faith of reason in itself. No doubt there are thinkers who appear to confuse the one position with the other, and argue that because there is no difference in our descriptions of a thing completely outside experience and of a naught, so all things must be within experience. But if our previous explanations be correct, then, these two positions may be kept separate from each other, and so he who accepts the necessity of the one position need not necessarily commit himself to the other. Hence it has been our endeavour in these pages to separate the arguments that have been advanced in support of the contention that the thing reveals itself in experience from

those that go to lend countenance to the presumption of a Universal Subject or an Eternal Consciousness.

The theories of correspondence and coherence express each a half-truth.

In view of the exaggerated notions that still prevail about the difference of the idealistic from the realistic contentions, it may be useful to point out at this place that the correspondence theory rightly understood is not entirely opposed to the idealistic analysis of the knowledge situation. It is never denied by a true idealist that our knowledge in so far as it is true must correspond to a reality that we do not create but discover, so that it is a matter of revelation as distinct from construction in the literal sense of the term. There is no doubt a constructive activity of thought involved in knowledge through which alone, as we shall see later more clearly, the world reveals itself to us; but this does not mean that the constructive activity of thought is identical with the creative activity of imagination. On the contrary, there is always in knowledge a reference to something which *is there* to be discovered in relation to which the truth and falsity of a judgment is determined. "No distinction between truth and falsity" it is emphatically observed by an eminent idealist, "can exist unless, in the act or state which claims truth, there is a reference to something

outside psychical occurrence in the course of ideas. As the claim to be true is made by every judgment in its form, there can be no judgment without some recognition of a difference between psychical occurrences and the system of reality. That is to say, there is no judgment unless the judging mind is more or less aware that it is possible to have an idea which is not in accordance with reality."¹ The idea, that is, may either be "in accordance with reality" or at variance with it; and it is only when the idea is in accordance with or corresponds to, the reality that it is true.

But the real defect of the correspondence theory consists in not the *definition* but the *test* that it claims to offer of a true judgment.² It is futile, as we have seen, to attempt to know whether our knowledge at a particular stage is true or not by reference to things external to knowledge. The correspondence can be known only by the amount of harmony that knowledge has so far attained to. The more knowledge tends to be a whole, the greater is our assurance of correspondence; the more there are discords and disharmony in knowledge, the greater is

¹ Bosanquet, *The Essentials of Logic*, p. 68.

² This we believe to be the significance also of the italicized words in Mr. Joachim's passage quoted above,

the distance between knowledge and reality. The correspondence theory as a test of truth cannot serve the purposes even of the realist who believes in the possibility of knowing the true nature of things; for, it can only terminate in scepticism and agnosticism when developed to its legitimate consequences. There are however eminent realists in our time who have come to admit that it is "by no means an easy matter to discover a form of correspondence to which there are no irrefutable objections."¹ But what prevents them from accepting the alternative theory is that the assumption that there can be only one coherent system requires itself a proof. "Thus, for example, it is possible that life is one long dream, and that the outer world has only that degree of reality that the objects of dreams have; . . . such a view does not seem inconsistent with known facts."² This difficulty in the coherence theory which is widely felt by the contemporary thinkers cannot be adequately handled in the context of the present chapter, and so must be postponed till the function of thought is explained. And for this, it may be useful to turn for a while to some of the outstanding

¹ Mr. Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* p. 190.

² *Ibid.*, p. 191.

features of Kant's analysis for the obvious reason that it was Kant who for the first time, at least in modern philosophy, brought out clearly the important rôle which thought plays in revealing the world.

Postponing the consideration of Kant's views on the status and the function of thought to the following chapter, we must address ourselves here to the elucidation of some of the vital points in the position as so far defined. Our discussion has so far been directed by the desire to accentuate the elements of truth in the idealistic and the realistic contentions respectively. The controversy has been perpetuated as much by linguistic ambiguities as by an over-statement of the truth. The realists, as we have tried to maintain, are right in their refusal to be dislodged from the commonsense view that knowledge does not create, it only discovers. The error of their position does not lie in insisting on the independence of the world; this independence may, in fact, be rightly called one of the first postulates of knowledge. They, however, go wrong only when, and in so far as, they look at the "face-value" of the things and so fail to see that the process of discovery is not as simple an affair as they are inclined to believe. Discovery implies a vigorous shifting,

The
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in the way of interpretation and re-interpretation, of the materials given through sense *qua* sense or even through commonsense. It is only through such a shifting or interpretation that the world is discovered by us. In this regard, critical realism is nearer the truth than neo-realism. The only defect in critical realism consists in its absolute separation of the 'object' from the 'essence' or 'content.'

(b) of
idealism.

It is only idealism, however, that can claim the full credit of having given an adequate analysis of the process of discovery. The idealists have rightly insisted, in different contexts, on interpretation as an essential factor in discovery. The world, they urge rightly, exists for us only in so far as the given materials are interpreted systematically. They, however, go wrong when, and in so far as, they proceed further to insist that the world cannot exist at all if not interpreted by a mind. It is this assumption alone that forces on them the conclusion that the world must exist only for a mind, either finite or infinite. If it does not exist for a finite mind, they repeat almost with tiresome uniformity, it must at least exist for an Eternal Thought or Absolute Mind. But the world, as we have urged frequently, may very well dispense with an interpreting mind, though it cannot

be actualized except as it exists for such a mind.

The world as actualized in knowledge at a particular stage may be different from the world as it is ; hence the possibility of error. The actualized world, in order to be true, must correspond with the world as it is. This correspondence, however, is known by the amount of stability or self-consistency as realised in knowledge, and not by instituting a comparison between the world as actualized and the world as it is. You may compare, for instance, the world-picture of Ptolemy with that of Copernicus, or the world-picture of Newton with that of Einstein, and measure their truth-value by comparing their respective stability. But it is impossible to compare any of them with the original and examine the degree of correspondence which each has with the original. This is impossible, again, not because there is no original, but because it is not actualized. " The end of truth," it has been rightly remarked by Bradley, " is to be and to possess reality in an ideal form Truth is not satisfied until we have all the facts, and until we understand perfectly what we have. And we do not understand perfectly the given material until we have it all together harmoniously, in such a way, that is, that

we are not impelled to strive for another and a better way of holding it together."¹ From this, however, it does not follow that reality must always exist in the ideal form for a self, or that apart from a self the reality does not exist; for, as Bradley himself sees clearly, "there surely is no meaning in a copy which makes its original."²

One-sidedness of the idealistic analysis.

We have already explained the half-truth expressed by the theories of coherence and correspondence respectively. We may observe here that the separation of coherence from correspondence, or, what is the same thing in different words, of the actualization from the independence of the world, is ultimately untenable. In this respect, one has to learn a lesson from Professor Perry's just complaint against the one-sidedness of the idealistic analysis, as it is generally presented. To assert that every mentioned thing is an idea or a content, he urges, is virtually a redundant proposition which amounts to this that every mentioned thing is mentioned, or that every idea is an idea. But this conveys no knowledge even about ideas.³ This objection, we believe, is unanswerable if the content of apprehension is supposed to have no

¹ *Truth and Reality*, p. 114.

² *Ibid.* p. 117.

³ *Present Philosophical Tendencies*, p. 131.

reference to the world beyond our experience; but, on the other hand, it has no force against the position for which the idea is the world in so far as it is actualized in experience; that is, in so far as the content is taken to be the 'what' of the 'that' which is in the process of communication or actualization.

This leads us naturally to the controversy on the distinctions between the *act*, the *content* and the *object* of knowledge introduced into contemporary thought by the famous Austrian philosopher Meinong. In every perception, according to Meinong's analysis, there is an act of perception distinguishable from the content perceived, and this latter, again, is distinguishable from the object. These distinctions have led to a serious division even in the realist camp. Professors Alexander and Laird are introspectively convinced of the presence of the act, but the neo-realists in general do not find any trace of it in their minds. What is important in this controversy, for our purpose here, is to enquire whether this psychological distinction throws any light on the epistemological problem of the relation of the mind to the world. It has often been supposed that the radical error of idealism is either to confuse the act of perception with the thing perceived, or to confuse the content

Meinong's
analysis
of know-
ledge.

of knowledge with the object of knowledge. So far as the former distinction is concerned, we think, it does not decide the chief issue between idealism and realism. We may, for example, think of the same circle through numerically different acts of thought, but few will deny that the circle has an existence only in our minds corresponding to which there may be nothing in the real world. The most you can say is that the circle subsists, but that does not tell us whether it exists independently of the knowing mind. Even Berkeley, as is well known, distinguished between the act of perception and the sensible objects perceived, and this in spite of his insistence on the mind-dependent character of the latter.

On the other hand, the distinction of the content of perception from the object has an important bearing on the epistemological problem. And the real force of Meinong's position may be appreciated from his remarks on the past event. When I am thinking of a past occurrence, it is obvious that the object to which my thought is directed is not existentially present in my mind; I am thinking of the past event through my present thought. That is, my present idea or content is intentionally directed to something which is not itself present existentially in my mind. The

past event occurred apart from my present thought, this is quite obvious. On the other hand, the event has no meaning *for me*, until it is a content of my consciousness. It is not of course necessary for the existence of the event that I should think about it; that is, my mind or my judgment does not constitute an element in the life of the event itself, it is not sustained by *my* judgment. Yet, it has a meaning for me only in so far as it is actualized in my experience. From this it is, we believe, clear that the object to which a content is intentionally directed need not be itself a content. Repeating the language of Professor Joachim in another context, we may say that the object is independent of the process by which I come to know it, and is unaffected by the time at which I know it. But, yet, this independent object itself whose nature holds aloof from the conditions of its 'existence for me' lives and moves and has its being in the judgments of finite minds.

The tendency of the idealists such as Bosanquet and Bradley is clearly towards obliterating the distinction between these two aspects of knowledge. Because the world has no meaning for me except in so far as it exists in my experience, it is forthwith concluded

Bosan-
quet's
criticism
of
Meinong.

that the world does not exist at all when it does not exist for a mind. This, we believe, is the radical error of their analysis of knowledge; and so it is necessary to dwell upon the point in a little more detail.

In pursuance of the tendency to deny the distinction between the two aspects of knowledge just mentioned, Bosanquet, for instance, concludes his examination of Meinong's theory by remarking that "it is plain that the separation of content and object of thought, whether in the Brentano-Meinong account of the mind, or in the recent Critical Realism, in spite of its plausibility and convenience, is altogether untenable."¹ His arguments, however, appear to be anything but convincing. He assumes that the relation of the object to the content may be one of similarity, and then points out that there is "no point at which we make a step from an image to an object resembling it."² But is the assumption indispensable for the theory? We think not. The truth it seeks to propound has nothing to do with the similarity between the content and the object; and so its value, we think, should not be assessed by connecting it with some type of

¹ *The Nature of Mind*, p. 54.

² *Ibid.* p. 51,

representative theory in its worst form.¹ But the fact is that the theory cannot be rejected except by showing that somehow or other it is a form of the copy-theory of truth, and while it holds the field there is no straight way to Bosanquet's type of idealism. Consequently, he remarks:—"Somehow—it may be difficult to explain but somehow, plainly, the real objects and events remain as immediately what we think of, what we talk about and affirm or deny things of, as anything which we touch or see." But does not Bosanquet himself assert the existence of the content when he relentlessly criticises the realistic theory of independence? He seems to be emphatic in his assertion that "what an undistorted view of the presupposition of knowledge affords us, is not a psychical character of things apart from the mind, but a logical character of reality as revealed through the mind,"² and it is this logical character, we suggest, which is in fact the content or the idea. "The nature of reality",

¹ We do not altogether deny the value of Bosanquet's criticism of the Brentano—Meinong analysis in so far as the latter tends to identify content with image. But Bosanquet appears to reject altogether the distinction between content and object, and this is suggested by his bracketing Meinong with the critical realist.

² *Logic II.*, p. 307.

he points out further, "is not differentially dependent on knowledge ; but it is a fallacy to go from that to the statement, ' Reality is what it is apart from knowledge, ' " and this fallacy he supposes to be plain.¹

In fact, it has been conceded by him fully at another place that the critical realist " has grasped the principle that truth cannot include the reality in its perfect character of a completed concrete whole ; " but his defect is that he draws from this the conclusion that the ' that ' is " incapable of entering into experience, " and so here we have " a complete and not relative separation between facts and ideas, and therefore, as Mr. Bradley has shown to be a necessary consequence, we are left without either. " ² Here, Bosanquet clearly recognises the reality of ideas as well as their relative separation from facts. It is not, therefore, open to him to deny altogether the ' contents ' as distinguished from ' objects. ' Moreover, it is widely believed that the world for Hegelian Idealism is, in ultimate analysis, a content of the mind, either finite or infinite ; and this conclusion is strongly suggested by the idealist's criticism of the realistic belief in an independent world of facts, as well as by his

¹ *Ibid.*, II, p. 306.

² *Contemporary Philosophy*, p. 136,

explanation of the subject-object relation. He is apparently never tired of emphasising the futility of every attempt to posit the existence of a reality which does not exist for a mind. And what is a 'content' if it be not a *thing existing for a mind*? We may leave aside the question whether there is, for instance, a horse-content coming between the act of perception and the object. But none can deny, and Bosanquet the least, that 'content' is not a mere word, but it is the logical meaning or the thing as it exists for the mind. Neo-Hegelianism, as far as we can see, would fain deny the existence of the 'object' rather than of the 'content.'

The 'object' again, as we have frequently urged, should not be confused with the 'content.' In respect of the relation between them, a certain amount of plausibility may be enjoyed by an anti-realistic theory while it is analysing the material world as confined within the narrow limits of the present moment. But it betrays its utter bankruptcy as soon as it undertakes an analysis of our knowledge of the past events or of other minds. How do we know a past event which had perhaps occurred even before we were born? How, again, do we know that other minds exist? So far as the constructive aspect of knowledge is concerned, the contributions of Bosanquet and Bradley, we

The crux
of the
idealistic
position.

think, are of inestimable value here. But when they come to deal with the revelatory aspect of knowledge, we suppose, their analysis is anything but satisfactory. Let us turn for a moment to Bosanquet's views on these two points.

"If we do not get to the past event by a jump from similar content to similar occurrence, how do we get to it?"¹ His answer is: "However remote in time or space may be the fact, it is always, if established, established as an amplification belonging to the same world which we presuppose and specify in setting out to prove it. If we are aware of house, we say, it had a builder; and we think as directly of the builder as of the house itself, even if the house is in Crete and the builder is of about the age of Minos." He goes perilously near the realist's position when, in another context, he remarks: "Of course, there is a reality which is more than an individual's thought. There is, at least, the thought of other individuals."² From these and other similar passages, it seems that Bosanquet does not deny the realist's contention that the things do not depend for their existence upon the fact that someone happens to know them; that is, he appears to believe fully that events may

¹ *The Nature of Mind*, p. 52.

² *Logic*, II., p. 267.

take place, and individuals may exist, even when they do not happen to exist for a self. But, in that case, it becomes increasingly difficult to understand what he means when it is argued emphatically in different contexts that the realist's contention is vitiated by "one central fallacy," *viz.*, "that to find the reality independent of experience you must have recourse to a reality apart from experience."¹ "Subjective Idealism is the nemesis of realism. What is wanted is to go forward, amending and expanding the experience which progressively approximates to giving us things as they are, under the full conditions which enable them to be what they are."

Thus, for Bosanquet, reality must exist within experience. You may amend and expand your experience, but "Knowledge has no such presupposition" as may require us to assume that "the reality known exists independently of the knowledge of it, and that we know it as it exists in this independence." On the other hand, he admits fully that we know directly the builder of the age of Minos as well as the existence of other individuals, though the builder lived long before we were born and the other individuals are more than our thoughts. Can these two

Bosanquet's
vacillation

¹ *Logic*, II., p. 302.

sets of expressions be reconciled? According to his first contention, the builder as well as the thought of other individuals cannot be real independently of the knowledge of them; but, according to the second, they have a reality which is more than an individual's thought. Bosanquet then is obviously asking us to think of a reality which is at once *more than* our thoughts and yet *not independent* of the knowledge of it. But this demand, we believe, none can satisfy with his present intellectual equipment; and none can satisfy it because it amounts to a demand to think of the unthinkable, or to know the unknowable. This contradiction in Bosanquet's position must remain inherent in every theory that does not recognise fully the revelatory character of knowledge. The contradiction may be concealed by ambiguous expressions; but nonetheless it remains there till realist's contention is conceded to. Here, Realism is the nemesis of Idealism.

It is perhaps clear from what we have already said that we do not deny that reality, as Bosanquet insists, lies ahead, that thought is the world-builder and it builds the world by an amplification of the knowledge given by sense *qua* sense. Hence, thought, as rightly and admirably shown by him, has a *nisus* to the concrete universal; and in this respect, the

inadequacy of the modern analysis consists in regarding thought as "an abstracting and generalising faculty, and science a departure from factual experience."¹ It is further true that the modern analysis is defective in so far as it turns back "in search of independence gained by omission" and, consequently, "cannot avoid committing arbitrary acts of abstraction".² But realism, we believe, is unquestionably on the right track when it insists that the world may exist even if not built by thought, that thought is only the revealer and not the builder in the literal sense of the term. It builds the world only in this sense that it removes contradictions from the perceived world and thus makes our experience a systematic whole in which alone the world as it is in itself is fully revealed; but the world remains a world even when it is not thus revealed, and so revelation is not essential to the reality of the world.

The ultimate source of Bosanquet's confusion on this head is perhaps traceable to the ambiguity with which he uses the term 'mind.' The percipient, he says, cannot be withdrawn from the world without making it the poorer by such an withdrawal. And he is right if he

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The mind
and the
subject.

¹ *The Principle of Individuality and Value*, p. 55.

² *Logic II.*, p. 303.

means by this that the sensation of sound, for example, is excited when a certain number of vibrations occur in a given interval of time, so that there can be no sound in the world when the mind is withdrawn from it. "The admission" he points out, "that the secondary qualities have special natures dependent upon mind is enough by itself to break down the principle that qualities of things must be independent of perception."¹ If this be all that Bosanquet is anxious to establish, then surely the world is mind-dependent in this sense. But, we submit, that does not prove that the sensation, the mind and the wave are dependent for their existence upon the fact that we know them. On the contrary, it seems clear that they are there even when they are not discovered; and in this sense they predate and postdate knowledge. And in so far as Bosanquet confuses these two different senses of the term 'mind-dependent,' he commits the same fallacy which Green has detected in the 'objective' method of Psychology, *viz.*, the confusion of sentience with consciousness.² From this defect of the psychological method, Green, of course, seeks to draw a conclusion which is

¹ *Logic II.*, p. 306.

² *Works I.*, p. 482.

essentially similar to Bosanquet's position, and here his conclusion is open to the same objections that we have raised against that of Bosanquet. But he at least shows clearly the fallacy of confusing the mind as sentience with the mind as the knower, or, as he puts it elsewhere, the subject with the mind. We need not, however, press this point further at this place.

We may summarise our contentions against Bosanquet's idealism in the language which he himself uses in different contexts. Thought is "always an affirmation about reality through the process of particular minds. Its conception is correlative to that of reality. If you ask what reality is, you can in the end say nothing but that it is the whole which thought is always endeavouring to affirm. And if you ask what thought is, you can in the end say nothing but that it is the central function of mind in affirming its partial world to belong to the real universe."¹ The real defect of realism, as we have suggested above, consists in its repudiation or misconception of thought; but it is right in insisting on the independence of the world which, though correlative to thought, is

Conclud-
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remarks.

¹ *Contemporary British Philosophy, First Series*,
p. 60.

not created by it, and so exists even when it is not revealed to an individual mind. The world, though it may in this sense be called a reality external to knowledge, is being communicated or actualized in our worlds as known, and so not external in the sense that it has a nature opposed to what is actualized or realisable in the world of knowledge.

This, however, does not mean that the two worlds are differently located, one coming between the other and the knowing mind. A philosopher need not maintain that the world of commonsense is different from the world of science simply because the defects of the former are removed by science which so far transcends commonsense knowledge. And though it is true that science discovers factors which are inaccessible to sense, yet this does not mean that the world of commonsense is a sort of *tertium quid* shutting us off from a direct vision of the real world. Similarly, when philosophical reflection transcends the scientific standpoint, we are not confronted with a so far unknown world. On the contrary, it is the same world which was imperfectly known from the previous standpoints is now revealed in its true nature, :

CHAPTER VI

Presentation and Judgment

In the last chapter we have done what nobody will consider to be a mean justice to the revelatory aspect of knowledge. This aspect has been explained with a fuller emphasis than what it has so far received at the hands of the idealists. We may now turn to the constructive aspect of knowledge without perhaps running any very serious risk of being misunderstood. And as it was Kant who practically lay the foundation of a theory of knowledge on its constructive side, a restatement of some of the outstanding features of Kant's theory may be profitably made the basis of our own contentions.

Kant as
the real
founder
of episte-
mology

Kant is rightly regarded as having first laid the foundation of true idealism. This, however, does not mean that the idealistic principles were never known before Kant. On the contrary, the thoughts of Plato and Aristotle were surcharged with a pre-eminently idealistic aura, and Plato at least is generally regarded to

have been the forerunner of the modern idealists who have, as a rule, drawn inspiration from the writings of this ancient philosopher. Coming down to the modern period; again, the thoughts of Leibnitz always move in an idealistic atmosphere, and the influence of Leibnitz on Kant's thought is simply enormous. But, in spite of these anticipations, it was Kant who for the first time placed in an articulated form the essence of an idealistic interpretation of the universe, in so far as it was he who first realised the importance of discovering the morphology of reality by an analysis of the morphology of knowledge. It is true that Locke also had a vague idea of the importance of a prior analysis of knowledge, as a necessary propaedeutics to metaphysics. But, in the absence of a clear idea of the nature of knowledge, he mistook the problem of psychology for that of epistemology. What he failed to see was that psychology as a science of the growth and development of the individual mind has to presuppose, and so cannot justify, the principles which are at the root of all the sciences, physical or mental. And though in the fourth book of the *Essay*, he comes in sight of the proper epistemological problem, his mind was too much occupied with the psychological questions of the previous

chapters to allow him to see fully the nature of the problems of knowledge. Philosophy had to wait for the development of the false method of empiricism into the intellectual *impasse* to which Locke's principles were brought by Hume, before the right epistemological standpoint could be disentangled from the psychological. And once the epistemological standpoint was attained, it became plain that nothing but idealism, in some form or other, could offer a true theory of existence.

The importance of Kant, in the history of philosophy, consists in his having first realised the existence of a number of first principles at the basis of knowledge and reality. With the insight of a real genius, he saw that there are certain universal features of thought which permeate human knowledge; and so a philosopher, even when ostensibly engaged in questioning their validity, has to accept them to be true. This he expressed by remarking—"Conceptions which make experience possible are for that very reason necessary." Another main prop of the Kantian analysis of knowledge is contained in the celebrated statement: "Understanding can perceive nothing, the senses can think nothing. Knowledge arises only from their united action." We shall first add

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a few comments on the latter remark and then proceed to expose the misinterpretations to which the former has been subjected, specially by those who have found it impossible to give up the psychological standpoint. Yet, as is well known, it was one of the permanent results of the Kantian analysis of knowledge that psychology, like all other sciences, has to presuppose the principles of knowledge, and so, it is impossible to solve the proper epistemological question by the psychological method.

The problem of objective reference.

The distinction between sense and thought with which Kant opens the transcendental logic is intended to convey the profound truth that, the reason why we refer a representation to the objective world is not to be found in the nature of the representation as a feeling that is felt. A representation, as a mere something before the mind, has no mark in it by which it can be recognised as either an objective reality or a mere illusion. It is a mere idea in the Lockian sense, or a mere presentation in the sense in which this term is used by the psychologists of our time. As Kant explains himself in the Prolegomena, "the senses set the planets before us, now as moving onward, and now as reversing their course; and in this there is neither truth nor falsehood, so long as we are content to regard all we

see as mere appearances, and to make no judgment in regard to the objective movements."¹ In explaining this passage, Caird adds that "it seems reasonable to say that there can be no doubt of the subjective reality of the phenomena that are presented to us by sense, whatever doubt there may be about their objective reality. There can be no doubt that appearances appear, . . . or are presented to us in sense. So long as we . . . do not ask any question, or make any assertion. . . . so long, it would seem, we cannot be deceived The question of truth or reality arises only when we go beyond the appearances, and make a judgment in which they are referred to an object. So long as the mind *passively* apprehends that which is presented to it, so long it cannot err; for *so long* there exists for it no distinction between appearance and reality, and therefore no possibility of mistaking the one for the other. To render such mistake possible, the mind must be active; it must go beyond what is immediately given in sense and refer it to some object, which perception may represent but which it does not exhaust, and with which, therefore, it is not immediately identical."

¹ Quoted by Caird in *The Critical Philosophy*, I., p. 382.

That the question of truth and error does not arise at all on the level of mere apprehension is clearly seen by the advocates of "the ideal system." So in explaining why we may doubt of sensible things, Descartes, for instance, gives us two reasons. We doubt in the first place, "because we know by experience that the senses sometimes err, and it would be imprudent to trust too much to what has once deceived us; secondly, because in dreams we perpetually seem to perceive or imagine innumerable objects which have no existence."¹ Allowing for the naive way in which Descartes expresses himself, the force of his remarks consists in pointing out that the mere fact that something appears before the sense-organs does not prove its reality; for, even illusions are as immediately perceived as the so-called real things. Hence the criterion by which the real is to be distinguished from the unreal is not to be found in the mere fact of presentability. It is, we believe, the same truth which Locke attempted to express by his famous definition of idea as that which the mind makes an object of contemplation without

¹ *The Principles of Philosophy, Part 1, 4th Principle.* Compare also the *Third Meditation*, where he is more explicit.

regard to its truth or falsity. And Kant is only reasserting the same truth with a clearer consciousness when he observes: "when an appearance is given us, we are still quite free as to our judgment on the matter. The phenomenon depends upon the senses, but the judgment upon the understanding, and the only question is, whether in the determination of the object there is truth or not. But the difference between truth and dreaming is not ascertained by the nature of the representations, which are referred to objects (for they are the same in both cases), but by their connection according to those rules, which determine the *coherence* of the representations in the concept of an object, and by ascertaining whether they can subsist together in experience or not."¹

It is however important to remark here that Kant's observations are not at all connected with his phenomenalistic position, and so their

¹ *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysic* (edited by J. P. Mahaffy), p. 45. Here, we have a clear anticipation by Kant of the Coherence Theory of truth, and so far Mr. N. K. Smith is right in holding that this theory, "though frequently ascribed to Hegel, has its real sources in the *Critique of Pure Reason*." (*Commentary*, p. xxxvii). But it is rather strange that such a thorough scholar as, Mr. Smith should have remarked that Kant "never himself employs the term Coherence." (*Ibid.*, p. 36.)

force is not in any way dependent on a preconceived notion of the relation between the subject and the object. In other words, the problem here is the purely epistemological problem of the factors involved in perception, and hence it cuts right across the boundary lines of idealism and realism. Whether the world of objects be organically connected with the knowing mind or not, it is still necessary to enquire into the implications of the distinction we ordinarily make between truth and error, reality and illusion. And so the problem has again made its appearance in contemporary philosophy, and it is in the hands of Mr. B. Russell that it appears in a form deserving of its importance. Mr. Russell's distinction between the two types of cognitive relation has become a current coin of contemporary thought. There are, according to him, two different cognitive relations with which a theory of knowledge has to deal, namely, acquaintance and judgment. Acquaintance is a two-term relation, while judgment is a multiple relation. And as acquaintance is a two-term relation, it has nothing to do with the distinction between truth and error. The problem of error properly arises only in relation to the cognitive relation of judgment. Hence, again, for him, there can be no question of truth and error with regard to

the sense data which are objects of sensible presentations.¹

The similarity of Mr. Russell's distinction between acquaintance ^{which} is also sometimes called presentation—and judgment to the Kantian distinction between representation and judgment is too obvious to be commented on. What, however, is more striking is the Kantian strain in which Mr. Russell, notwithstanding his predilection for the correspondence theory of truth, argues in support of the coherence theory. The whole process of verification, it is said, "may be illustrated by looking up a familiar quotation, finding it in the expected words, and in the expected part of the book."² "Dreams and waking life," it is remarked again, "in our first efforts at construction, must be treated with equal respect; it is only by some reality not *merely* sensible that dreams can be condemned."³ The only standard by which we distinguish the real things of the

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¹ Similarly, Prof. Hoernlé remarks that taken abstractly, particular sense data simply *are*. "In this of course, their 'reality' is not in debate." *Studies in Contemporary Metaphysics*, p. 76. Compare also: "In truth, all appearances are *prima facie* real ones, and later are sorted out."—Alexander, *Space, etc.*, II. p. 192.

² *Analysis of Mind*, p. 270.

³ *Our Knowledge of the External World*, p. 79.

waking life from the unreal things in dreams, he sees clearly, is that the former have a "greater extent and consistency." "It is only the failure of our dreams to form a consistent whole, either with each other or with waking life, that makes us condemn them."¹ It is difficult to explain in a clearer form and within such a short compass the coherence theory of truth as suggested by Kant in the passage quoted above. And Mr. Russell's reluctant homage to the coherence theory lends countenance to the presumption that no serious thinking can be absolutely false. In his pilgrim's progress, the philosopher is sure to tumble upon the rest-house of truth provided he be sincere in his search, and serious in his endeavour to reach the temple of knowledge. Thus, we find even Berkeley and Hume recognising in the *order* and *coherence* of the ideas the distinguishing feature of what is real, though, for the former, it is divinely established, and, for the latter it is the source of the illusion of identity and independence.

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Thus we see that the distinction between judgment and presentation has permeated philosophical thought from the time of Descartes down to the present day. There are, however, philosophers who would reject the distinction

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

on the ground of its psychological absurdity. Thus, for instance, it is a well-known criticism of the Kantian theory of knowledge that it implies a false distinction of sense and understanding, and so the Kantian distinction of the sense-appearances from the principles of thought is now generally regarded as the unwarranted dogma of a defunct psychology. Similarly, Mr. Russell's distinction between knowledge through acquaintance and knowledge through description has been generally thought to be based on an abstraction. But the criticism of a theory is certainly one-sided when it does not do justice to all the aspects of the idea it is intended to express. Even if it be admitted, though it has not been universally admitted, that the simple apprehension or the mere perception of the sense-appearances apart from the activity of thought cannot be an event in the mental history of an individual, that we do not first know the appearances as mere appearances and then proceed to judge about them; but, on the contrary, our first having the appearance is to refer it to an objective order of things—yet, the question remains if the distinction between the real and the unreal has any root in the mere fact that certain appearances appear. Illusions, for instance, must exist before our senses in order that they can be rejected as

false. No philosopher perhaps has been able to supersede T. H. Green in minimising the importance of sensations in the sphere of knowledge; and yet, Green had to admit that the question about the objective reality of an impression "is not equivalent to a question whether a feeling is felt. Some feeling must be felt in order to the possibility of the question being raised at all. It is a question whether a given feeling is what it is taken to be, or in other words whether it is related as it seems to be related."¹

What has been so far said about the distinction between illusion and reality holds good also of the familiar distinction between the mere appearances and the real appearances. The sensible size of the sun, the sensible shape of the stick in the tumbler half-filled with water, the sensible rest of the earth, are not real.² In fact, as we are told by commonsense as well as science, the visual sense is the most prolific source of such false appearances. But

¹ *Prolegomena*, Sec. 12.

² That it is impossible to identify *sensa* with physical objects, as is done by Mr. Alexander, has been rightly urged by Mr. Stout (*Mind & Matter*, p. 208). We must add, however, that the mistake in illusory appearances arises from the appearance being referred to conditions under which it does not exist; and this mistake is known by the contradictions to which our first interpretation leads to.

they are false, not because they do not appear. Dreams and hallucinations do not differ in respect of the fact of presentability from the real appearances. On the contrary, there are false appearances which are as sensibly given after their correction as before. While the illusory appearance ceases to exist with the advent of knowledge, the obstinate appearances of sense, like the sensible size of the sun, do not fail to be sensibly presented even after we have known them to be false. In such cases, the rational belief and the false appearance live together almost coquetting with each other throughout the earthly career of man. Whatever may be the explanation of the sensible size of the sun, for instance, it is only the sensible size that is ever presented before our sight. If then we reject the sensible presentation as false, the reason evidently cannot be found in the mere fact of presentability. And this conclusion remains true even if we replace the word presentation by the more illuminating term perspective.

We must note here a serious confusion of thought involved in the controversy on the relation of sense to understanding. Kant has sometimes been supposed, specially by psychologists, to have laid the foundation of what is now called the genetic theory of our knowledge

The problem of genetic psychology is different from that of epistemology

of the external world, in so far as he rejects simple apprehension in favour of apprehension accompanied with judgment as a true description of beginning of experience. Hence the truth of his distinction between sense and understanding, it is fancied, depends upon the findings of psychology. That is, if it be psychologically established that sense precedes thought in the development of individual knowledge, then, surely, Kant was wrong in ascribing thought to primitive experience; if, on the other hand, judgment be psychologically established as being a co-operative factor with sense from the beginning of individual experience, then, Kant's analysis, it is supposed, is founded on a sound psychological basis.

Now, it is well-known how our psychologists are seriously divided on the question of priority of sense to thought. Thus, for instance, James Ward is emphatic on sense-knowledge being prior to thought-knowledge, and urges over against the position of Green that "though sense is speechless, it is not 'senseless.'"¹ On the other hand, it has been contended by no less a psychologist than Mr. G. F. Stout that "if we examine critically Ward's treatment of the development of the

¹ *Mind*, xxviii. p. 259.

individual percipient prior to the beginning of the trans-subjective stage, we find that it already involves in manifold ways thought as well as sense."¹ Fortunately, however, Kant's analysis has nothing to do with the uncertain movement of the psychological theories. Whether or no sense precedes thought as a matter of genesis may be left to the happy conjectures of the psychologists. For, we venture to suggest, the epistemological distinction between sense and understanding does not depend upon the truth of a psychological theory. To confuse these two standpoints was the besetting sin of Locke who, in his disgust at the theory of innate ideas, supposed that to show the *a posteriori* derivation of knowledge is to refute the epistemological priority of the formal conceptions of thought. But it never occurred to him that experience regarded psychologically has epistemological presuppositions. Similarly, Kant might reply that thought may or may not be psychologically *a priori*, but it is surely *a priori* epistemologically. In other words, whether or no the child refers the immediate presentation to a real world which is not itself presented, it is still true that there could be

¹ *The Monist* xxxvi, 1926, p. 41; *Studies in Philosophy and Psychology*, p. 110.

no real world for us, if we had not systematised the immediately given sense-appearances according to the formal conceptions of thought.

The
epistemo-
logist's
fallacy

Returning once more to the distinction between presentation and judgment, we must repeat that it is one thing to say that immediate experience enters as an indispensable factor into all knowledge, while it is an entirely different thing to assert that immediate experience by itself is the source of a particular type of knowledge, the other type having its origin in thought alone. This is in flat contradiction with Kant's dictum about the co-operation of sense and thought in all knowledge, which is the corner-stone of his theory of knowledge. But to deny the existence of the immediate sense-data is to commit what may be called the "epistemologist's fallacy." Facts in order to be interpreted must be first apprehended as given, however short the interval may be between these two phases of knowledge. It is needless to labour this point—a point which has been pressed with relentless acuteness by the critics of idealism.¹ Kant's "natura

¹ E.g., by Prof. A. Seth in his *Hegelianism and Personality*, pp. 79—83. It is however claimed that even Hegel did not mean to reduce the matter of intuition to pure thought. See McTaggart's *Hegelian Dialectic*, second edition, pp. 61, 113, 207.

materialiter spectata" cannot be reduced to mere relations any more than the ideas and perceptions of pre-Kantian empiricism or the sense-data of contemporary philosophy.¹ If the post-Kantian identification of form and content is interpreted as a polemic against the distinction of the given facts from their interpretations, we must then reply in Kant's words that our understanding is not intuitive. The recognition of the immediate objects of perception then, we claim, is the true merit of what is generally known as subjective idealism. In so far as Kant's critics have failed to do justice to this aspect of his teachings, the real difficulties of external perception are simply flung to the winds.

If, then, it is admitted that presentation and judgment, though not two distinct stages in the development of knowledge, are yet two distinguishable factors or moments in the process of knowledge, and if it be further admitted that the distinction between the real and the unreal

¹ This, however, does not mean that we can *know* these ideas, in the strict sense of the term 'knowing,' without and apart from all relations. We can surely feel the tooth-ache without being dentists, but to know the feeling in the totality of its conditions under which alone it is real, is entirely different from knowledge in the way of feeling. It may be further noted that Kant's sense-manifold may be sense-data as well as the data of commonsense which are unsystematic.

is not to be found in the mere fact of presentability, then, the conclusion seems inevitable that the distinction must have its roots in the other factor, namely, judgment or thought. In other words, the distinction between the real and the unreal is due to a particular type of intellectual organisation which we possess as rational beings; and except in relation to a still unrealised intellectual ideal about what the world must be, the distinctions we habitually make between truth and error, or real and unreal appearances, would be unmeaning for us. To put this in yet another form, nothing would be false or illusory for us if thought had no power to anticipate, before actual observation or experiment, the general features of the world. This, we venture to suggest, was one of the conclusions which Kant sought to establish in his transcendental logic which he defined as the science of the *a priori* knowledge, its possibility, principles and extent. Once this is made clear, it will appear that the paradoxical dictum of Kant—Understanding makes Nature¹—is essentially true, though it might be made much less paradoxical and its offensiveness consider-

¹ Kant did not put his dictum exactly in this form; it was Green who adopted this formula as expressing Kant's meaning. I owe this suggestion to Professor H. H. Joachim.

ably mitigated by restating the dictum in the form that Nature reveals herself through intellectual construction, or that theoretical construction is the process of self-revelation of the real world. The contention of the modern critics that we do not create the world in the process of knowing it; on the contrary, knowledge presupposes the existence of the world; or, that the existence and the quality of things are not affected by the fact that somebody knows them;—this contention, as we have admitted before, is essentially correct. But this, rightly understood, does not conflict with the dictum that knowledge implies intellectual construction, so that what is revelation from the side of the object is construction from the side of the subject. This, as will be explained below, is one of the permanent achievements of Kant in the sphere of epistemology.

With these comments on Kant's distinction between sense and understanding, we must now proceed to the really valuable part of his theory of knowledge.

It is now a matter of common knowledge that the avowed purpose, or at least one of the purposes of the *Critique of Pure Reason* was to vindicate, as against the disintegrating attacks of Hume, the validity of the synthetic judgments that lie at the foundation of the

Divergent
opinions
on Kant's
reply to
Hume.

mathematical and the physical sciences. But how far the sceptical attacks on the possibility of knowledge admit of an answer, and how far Kant has been able to carry his enquiry to successful and permanent issues are questions on which there is anything but unanimity among the critics and exponents of the Critical Philosophy. There are not wanting, even to this day, persons of deserved celebrity in the speculative field who are of opinion that Kant's labour has been entirely futile, because Hume's problems are made of such stuff as necessarily precludes the possibility of anything approaching a satisfactory or final solution. Now, historically, the question is at least as old as the *Critique* itself. The first definite note of doubt about the achievements of Kant is struck in a comparison in which the 'Prussian Hume' is supposed to be merely chewing the cud of the 'causal whirligig' while the English Hume is credited with a truer insight into the difficulties of the knowledge situation.¹ Similarly, Mendelssohn sees in the Critical Philosophy only a revival of the scepticism of Hume. It is, however, in Solomon Maimon's observations that we find the most damaging criticism of the Kantian

¹ Hamann's Letter to Herder, quoted by Höffding in his *History of Modern Philosophy*, ii., p. 113.

position as an answer to Hume's sceptical deliberations. According to this acute critic, whose acuteness and critical gifts are thought almost unrivalled by Kant himself, Hume has by no means been refuted by Kant, and, it is further remarked, the sceptical conclusions of Hume cannot be refuted. The plausibility of Kant's refutation of Hume is said to be due to a fatal ambiguity in the term 'experience.' There is a whole world of difference between the experience from which Hume proposes to derive the causal concept and the experience on which Kant bases his famous transcendental deduction of the categories. Experience, for Hume, is simply the invariable perception that generates in us habits and expectations; for Kant, on the other hand, experience involves necessary order in the sequence of phenomena. Maimon is here inclined to side with Hume in holding that the given exhibits only temporal relations without necessity, so that it is idle to demonstrate objectively valid rational knowledge beyond the sphere of pure mathematics. Another point pressed by Maimon is apparently of a more serious nature. The forms of knowledge upon which rests the entire burden of the transcendental logic can be discovered only by way of experience; but as experience can guarantee neither the completeness nor the

necessity of the categories, Kant's dream of a deduction of the forms of knowledge has been entirely futile. And even granting that our thought commands a system of categories they can never be actually applied to the given.

Maimon's criticism of the Kantian theory of knowledge has more than a historical importance. In the opinion of many contemporary thinkers his criticism goes to the very root of the difficulty of Kant's analysis of knowledge, and hence possesses a significance that is more or less of a permanent nature. In fact, some of the most searching criticisms that have been recently directed against Kant's position appear to all intents and purposes to countenance by implication a modified form of Maimon's semi-sceptical solution of the problems of knowledge. It is, however, a matter of paramount importance to realise clearly that an unqualified rejection of Kant's standpoint must lead one to despair of knowledge; for, as we hope to explain below, scepticism is the only attitude of mind that can ever offer a logical alternative to criticism. Indeed, the issues involved in Kant's reply to Hume are of a more general nature than what they are ordinarily realised to be. The question is not whether an individual thinker has been successfully refuted by

another or not. On the contrary, the issues that divide Kant from Hume and the different lines on which they respectively develop their arguments represent the two alternative attitudes of mind that must be ultimately displayed by every thinker who squarely meets the problems of knowledge. If Kant has failed to answer Hume, then there is no escape from scepticism; if, on the other hand, scepticism be not the last word of human reason, then one must accept the fundamental principles of the Kantian theory of knowledge. Indeed, all attempts at striking a middle course, when carefully scrutinized, will be found to be based on confusion of the real issues; and if a thinker still persists in the belief that a novel theory may avoid the excesses and the defects which in his opinion are inseparable from the positions of Hume and Kant, this must be due to an imperfect appreciation of the transition from Hume to Kant. To set these contentions of ours in a clearer light, we shall first of all state the Kantian position in its original form without attempting to mitigate the apparently paradoxical nature of his central thesis, and then turn to Maimon's reflections to see how far the Kantian position can be regarded as 'an 'overcome standpoint.'

The
psychological
problem
is distinct
from the
epistemological.

Kant's contribution to the theory of knowledge, as he himself tells us in the preface, is contained in the apparently extravagant assertion that the objects must conform to our cognition ; or, as he puts it in a different context, Understanding is the source of all combinations. There is yet another form in which he is fond of formulating the problem of the Critical Philosophy ; namely, what and how much can reason and understanding, apart from experience, cognize? These are some of the different expressions of the main thesis that Kant sought to make explicit in his monumental work. And in restating his position, we shall take the liberty of proceeding in a way slightly different from that of Kant, partly because the relevant arguments of the *Critique* are very often overlaid with extraneous details of dubious value, and partly because the simplicity and directness of his arguments are, not infrequently, suppressed by the formidable technics of the German language.

The first point we would like to press is a commonplace of logic ; namely, that every assertion, positive as well as negative, claims to be true. This must be accepted even by the most redoubtable opponent of intellectualism. That we can make intelligible assertions about whatever is real, and that our assertions are meant

to be true, may fairly be taken to be the bedrock postulates of all speculative explorations of the Universe. When, however, this apparently innocent position is pressed home in its full force, it will be found to develop implications some of which are of very far-reaching consequences for philosophy. One of these implications is that the psychological and the logical aspects of a belief are not identical. That is, a belief cannot be true on its own right, howsoever necessary be its emergence as a psychological event in the mental history of an individual. An erroneous belief has its own history; and it, like all other events of the world, stand in need of explanation. Again, the explanation of a false belief, in its turn, presupposes the distinction of truth and falsity, so that in respect of a given explanation the question of validity may be freshly raised. If, on the contrary, we identify the psychological with the logical aspect of the belief, the crudest superstition would have to be accepted as equally true with the most carefully weighed conclusion of the scientist or the philosopher. Hence, reason must sit in judgment on the will to believe, and the psychological question of the origin of belief should not prejudice the question of validity. It is strange that the truth of such an ultimate

implicate of knowledge has failed to carry conviction with the opponents of intellectualism of the different schools who, in spite of their internal divergence on a number of points, agree in their insistence on the impossibility of distinguishing the psychological from the strictly epistemological enquiries. It will be necessary to examine this widespread tendency in greater details. In the meantime, we accept this distinction as one of the fundamental points of epistemology, and proceed to bring out a few more implications of the logical commonplace under consideration.

Once it is admitted that the distinction between a true and a false belief is not to be found in the nature of the belief as an event in the mental history of the individual, it is easy to see that what invests it with the logical character is its conformity or otherwise to something beyond itself. That is, the truth or falsity of the belief has to be ascertained by reference to an objective order of things, so that when an assertion is claimed to be true, what is implied is not simply that an individual has somehow or other come to hold a particular belief, but that it has an objective basis in the nature of things. No theory of truth that does not distinguish between these two aspects of an assertion can stand the scrutiny of critical thought.

With these preliminary remarks, if we now restate the problem of *a priori* knowledge, it will assume some such form as this : Is it possible to anticipate the character of that objective world which determines the truth-value of an assertion? Our answer is that the very possibility of knowledge rests on the power we possess of foreseeing what the world must be in its general features. Apparently, there is a ring of absurdity about this position, and the reason is that we all suffer more or less from an empirical bias which pursues us right into the domain of speculative enquiry. Yet, on a closer scrutiny, it will be evident that scepticism must follow in the wake of radical empiricism. If we had no power of anticipating, prior to observation and experiment, the rational implicates of the world, it would have been utterly impossible to unravel its ~~mystery~~ by the help of the purely *a posteriori* methods of investigation. This, it is needless to say, was the chief contention of Kant in the transcendental deduction of the categories. The idea which he sought to express with wearisome repetitions in that deduction is, in the opinion of one of the ablest exponents of Kant's philosophy, thoroughly justified. "Undoubtedly nature, as we perceive and think it as a system of unitary, permanent

Nature as
a System-
atic Unity
is not
known
through
sense.

things bearing a reciprocal relation to one another, is not conveyed into our consciousness through the senses, but is created by the activity of the understanding. The eyes and ears convey to us separate fragments of perceptions, as they do to animals also. Out of these, the understanding, by reflecting and inquiring, ordering and supplementing, makes the totality of related things that we call nature. We hasten to add that this is, of course, not to be taken as meaning the understanding of the single individual, but the intellectual activity of the generations that are united in the unity of the historical life. It is this which first creates a primitive system of concepts in the words of a language, and later produces in philosophy and science an ever more complete system of reality. If the world, as we now represent it, is in extent and form other than the world of the ancient and mediæval philosophers, this is without doubt the consequence of all the intellectual labour that has in the meantime been expended. The mathematicians and astronomers, the physicists and chemists, have constructed our world ; the manner in which it is at present manifested to the senses in no wise differs from that of two thousand years ago.”¹

¹ Paulsen, *Kant*, p. 175.

Paulsen, we believe, has rightly emphasised here the constructive aspect of knowledge, which may almost be called the corner-stone of the Kantian epistemology. Knowledge, according to Kant, is not derived from mere sense-experience ; that is, science is not merely a matter of registering sense-given facts. Mere sense-perception cannot reveal Nature which is the subject of experimental inquiries. It is only in consequence of the intellectual ideal of a systematic unity which the scientist brings with him into the laboratory, that the experiments succeed in feeling the otherwise inaccessible heartbeats of Nature. Here, of course, Kant's fundamental thesis comes into collision with the spirit of modern science and contemporary thought ; for, as is well known, it is one of the main tenets of contemporary science and philosophy that nature is neither systematic nor a unity. The world, it is emphatically maintained, is full of contradictions, and is, at best, an assemblage or aggregate of elements that cannot be ultimately reduced to a unity ; and it has been consequently urged that the intellectual ideal, together with the tendency to systematize, is only a rational make-shift useful for the convenience of practical life. .

Contemporary
tendency
to deny
the Unity
of Nature.

Now, in view of the fundamental nature of the issue involved in this contention, it will be

necessary to consider it in some details. Meanwhile, it may be admitted that there is, no doubt, a sense in which the actual world is riddled with inconsistencies, and this has been fully recognised even by those who accentuate the rational character of the world. In fact, had there not been conflicts and discords in our actual experience, the tendency to systematize, and for the matter of that reason itself, would remain as a hidden power in us. But in that case, it would be entirely unnecessary to undertake the laborious investigations for making the world yield its secrets; for, both philosophy and science are born of the disparity between what we find the world to be and what we think it ought to be. This difference between the real and the ideal underlies all interpretations of Nature and History. Reason, therefore, is not like an instrument which we can take up or lay aside, and the systematizing tendency is not a mere tool for achieving practical efficiency. On the contrary, it is the source of the intellectual ideal which inspires and permeates all attempts at understanding the world. The pragmatist and the evolutionist, the idealist and the realist,—in fact, everyone who is interested in giving an intelligible account of the world—has of necessity to presuppose the possibility of a systematic pre-

sentation. The only difference is that they seek to systematize in different ways. Hence, when they reject each other's interpretations, it is wrong to think that they can reject the intellectual ideal. We may differ as to *how* we systematize, but to refuse to systematize is to give up philosophy; in this sense, the pragmatist and the humanist are no less intellectualists than the banned intellectualist proper. The fact is that the ideal of a systematic whole to which thought inevitably looks forward, or thought's *nisus* towards a whole, as Bosanquet puts it, is responsible for our dissatisfaction at any theory which appears to be inconsistent with what we think the world to be. Hence, again, the law of consistency is regarded as the ultimate law of thought and existence.

The mood of self-complacency in which the apparently conflicting sense-data are taken to reveal the ultimate nature of the material world, and the unqualified rejection of the need for further systematization, which are so characteristic of contemporary science and philosophy, may be, at best, a passing mood of reason. But this cannot afford a permanent satisfaction, for, thought by its very nature looks forward to the ideal of a systematic whole. This *nisus* of thought to the whole is, in fact,

present, not only in philosophical construction but in science as well as commonsense knowledge. The process of systematization begins from the moment when the child asks *names* under which it can classify the things of ordinary experience, and thus introduces unity into the confusing sense-presentations. It is, again, the same misapprehension which forces the scientist the task of a further unification of commonsense knowledge. And, finally, philosophy arises out of the very same logical urge to remove inconsistencies from knowledge, and thus to reveal the world as a completely systematized reality.

This process of unification is effected in accordance with those fixed forms of thought that are generally known as the categories or the first principles of knowledge. It was Kant's merit, as suggested above, to have first commenced the exploration of this region of transcendental elements of knowledge and existence, and this constituted his epoch-making discovery. But, in view of the misinterpretations to which the doctrine of categories has been subjected, it is necessary to turn for a while to the consideration of this invaluable theory.

